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THE PEOPLE'S BIBLE HISTORY

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VOLUME II.

PUBLISHED BY

THE HENRY O. SHEPARD COMPANY,
CHICAGO.

1895.



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1895

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BOOK IX.

FROM THE CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON TO THE RETURN OF THE EXILES.

BY

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W. J. Moore

BOOK IX.

FROM THE CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON TO THE RETURN OF THE EXILES.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL SURVEY.

HUMAN history is the record of a progressive development. It marks the successive steps in a yet unsolved problem. The factors of this problem are God and Man. These cannot be separated in any intelligent study of the whole development. Nor can either be regarded as solely responsible for what we call the course of things. Nevertheless, this separation is precisely what has been attempted by some who aim to set in order past events. Such thinkers consider history as the result of a great plan which has been distinctly impressing itself upon the ages, and which will ultimately bring everything to an orderly conclusion. They, furthermore, imagine that within the scope of this plan man is left entirely alone to work out his own salvation. Hence, they either eliminate God from all the affairs of this life, or else they allow no coöperation with him in carrying out the great scheme of human history. Most of these thinkers take the Rationalistic view, and consequently they seek to account for everything by the operation of the plan to which reference has been made, and this leaves man solely responsible for all the facts connected with the history of our race.

But if all this were certainly true, the real problem would still remain unsolved. We should still be entirely ignorant of how the plan came into existence and how it is preserved unbroken through the ages. In such a case the difficulty is only removed a single step by the one-sided view which refers everything in the matter of historic development to the human alone. But when the divine factor is taken into account the solution of the problem of history becomes much less difficult; and it only requires a little more than a superficial view in order plainly to discern that at least three great facts must constantly be accepted as verities while we are studying history, if we wish to reach anything like satisfactory conclusions. These facts are Creation, Providence, and Redemption; and these at once bring us into the presence of a Creator, Governor, and Redeemer.

At the same time, we must not depend wholly upon the divine. God has associated with himself man in all the affairs of this world, and therefore the actions of men must be carefully considered in any philosophical and comprehensive study of human history. In short, God and man must be regarded as coöperating in all the affairs of this life; and consequently they cannot be legitimately separated when we come to examine the records of the past in order to understand the progress of either nations or individuals.

It is readily admitted that there is a plan of history. What we call Providence plainly implies this; and he who studies Providence with a clear insight will not fail to discern as distinctly the reign of law as when studying Creation or Redemption. How could it be otherwise, if either God or man is responsible for the course of things? But we have just seen that both are responsible, and therefore we are doubly assured that there must be a clearly

defined plan or method in the development of all human history, whether we are always able to perceive it or not, and this is especially true of Jewish history, and particularly that part of it relating to the Exile and the Return.

It may, however, help us to understand how the plan or method works, if a simple illustration is carefully studied. The Jordan is a somewhat circuitous river, at times moving smoothly over short stretches of almost level river bed; but soon it dashes with impetuous velocity over a heavy down grade, which causes the water to leap and plunge as if it were carried along by some mad fiend who is seeking to demonstrate what wild confusion may be produced by the combination of power and disorder. This river has its main fountain source, and to some extent constantly preserves its original character, notwithstanding a number of tributaries empty into it before it finally reaches the Dead Sea. The whole course, characteristics, and movement of the Jordan strikingly suggest the stream of human history, and especially as that history relates to the Israelitish nation. Undoubtedly the main stream of history must all the time be identified with God's chosen people. And this main stream can be distinctly discerned through all the ages right along from Abraham until it empties into the Dead Sea of the Dispersion. There are, however, tributaries which flow into this as there are those which flow into the Jordan. Chief among the former may be mentioned the Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian, and Canaanitish branches. The first two must be specially studied in connection with the Jewish Exile, for it cannot be doubted that these branches had a great deal of influence in determining the course and character of Jewish history, especially between the years 625 B. C. and 425 B. C. The fortunes of the Jewish people for this period of two hundred years must be studied in association with the history of Babylon, for during this time the Babylonian tributary constantly mingles with the Jewish waters, and consequently very materially modifies the main stream of human history. But in order to understand the influence of the Babylonian tributary, a brief notice of the Assyrian empire is necessary. And such a notice is logically associated with the stirring events which immediately preceded the Exile; for the period of thirty-eight years immediately prior to the destruction of Jerusalem was crowded with facts bearing on the destiny of the Jewish people, and any careful study of these facts must include a brief examination of the rise and fall of the Assyrian empire.¹

In 625 B. C., Babylon threw off the Assyrian yoke. Assur-ebil-ili, the last of the Assyrian kings who held dominion over Babylon, had for his viceroy in that city Nabopolassar, a shrewd, ambitious, and determined man, who, taking advantage of the bitter enmity existing

¹ The authorities used by the writer of Book IX cover a wide field, but it has not been thought necessary to refer specifically to these in the body of the work except in a few instances where somewhat lengthy quotations are made. The author, however, desires to express his indebtedness to very many writers who have preceded him in treating the period he has had under review. He desires specially to mention the following works, most of which have been freely consulted, and some of their material occasionally used without acknowledgment in the body of the book: "The Speaker's Commentary"; Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible"; Canon George Rawlinson's "Egypt and Babylon" (London: Hodder & Stoughton); "The Origin of Nations"; "Records of the Past"; Professor Sayce's "Hibbert Lectures"; "Fresh Lights from Ancient Monuments"; "Social Life among the Syrians and Babylonians" (London: Religious Tract Society, 1893); Professor Driver's "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," fifth edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark); Caspari's "Introduction to the Book of Daniel" (Leipzig); Maspero's "*Historie Ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient*" (1886); Schrader, "*Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*" (1883); George Smith's "Assyria," "Babylonia," "Assurbanipal"; Dean Stanley's "Jewish Church"; Steiner's "*Die Kleinen Propheten*" (1881); *The Expository Times*, Vols. III, IV and V (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark); Dr. Geikie's "Bible by Modern Light" (London: Jas. Nisbet & Co., 1894); Archdeacon Farrar's "II. Kings" (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1894); Bennett's "Books of Chronicles" (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1894); Canon Rawlinson's "Ezra and Nehemiah" (London: Jas. Nisbet & Co.); Professor Ryle's "Ezra and Nehemiah" (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Series 1893); Archdeacon Farrar's "Minor Prophets" (London: Jas. Nisbet & Co.); Canon Cheyne's "Jeremiah" (London: Jas. Nisbet & Co.); Blake's "How to Read the Prophets" (Jeremiah and Ezekiel) (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark); Smith's "Old Testament History"; Dr. Pope's "Introduction to Ezra and Nehemiah" (London: Cassell & Co.); Dr. Murphy's "Book of Daniel" (London: Jas. Nisbet & Co., 1884); Professor Robertson Smith's "Prophets of Israel"; Deane's "Daniel, His Life and Times" (London: Jas. Nisbet & Co.); Delitzsch's "Messianic Prophecies" (Edinburgh, 1880); Reuss' "*Les Prophetes*" (Paris); Orelli's "*Das Buch Ezechiel u. de Zwölf Kleinen Propheten*"; Ewald's "*Die Propheten, 2te Aufl*"; Pusey, "The Minor Prophets" (1860); Schrader's "Cuneiform Inscriptions."



Ashdod. March 4, 1891. No. 1000. A

between the Babylonians and the Assyrians, headed a revolt and joined the Egyptians and the Medes in an attack upon Nineveh. This attack probably began in earnest about 609 B. C., and the city was finally taken in 607 or 606 B. C., the exact date being a little uncertain. At this time Assyria was completely absorbed by Babylon, and consequently the great Assyrian empire, which had so long controlled the destinies of the nations, had now ceased to exist.

But all this happened quite in harmony with what the prophets of God had predicted. Warnings were given to Nineveh by the preaching of Jonah, but these warnings produced little more than a temporary repentance, and consequently the final catastrophe was only delayed, not averted. Babylon, which had for a long time been restive under Assyrian rule, was only too willing to follow Nabopolassar in his revolt and join with the Median king, Cyaxares, in an effort to overthrow the Assyrian domination.

It is both interesting and instructive to notice how events conspired to bring about the result aimed at in the revolt. Indeed, it is impossible to study the great facts of this period without tracing the hand of that providence which must always be recognized in any exhaustive treatment of history. It must be remembered that at the time under consideration the two great powers of the world were Assyria and Egypt, and these were frequently opposed to each other in hostile conflict. It was just when the Egyptians were gradually working their way in the west under Pharaoh-Necho that the Babylonians and Medes were advancing on the east and on the north. And apparently at the very moment when the Egyptians took Ashdod, the strongest Assyrian fortress in the west, Babylon declared her independence and joined the Median and Armenian kings in their attack upon Assyria. Cyaxares made the attack from the north, Nabopolassar from the center of the empire, while the Egyptians appeared suddenly in the west. And it must not be forgotten that it was during this campaign, and while attempting to stop the Egyptian advance, that King Josiah lost his life. At the battle of Carchemish the Egyptians were victorious, and by this one blow gained possession of Syria and Palestine, and thus the great Assyrian empire began to crumble even before the fall of Nineveh took place.

It is not known whether the Egyptian army penetrated beyond the Euphrates, and consequently it is not known whether the Egyptians coöperated any further in the attack upon Nineveh. Indeed, the story of the fall of that city is very imperfectly given in any available trustworthy records. We do not even know by what means the city was finally taken. Mr. Budge¹ is of the opinion that the river Tigris, on the north side of which the city was situated, rose and carried away the greater part of the wall, and that then the Assyrian king, Esarhaddon II., the last of the Assyrian monarchs, gathered together his wives and property into his palace and set it on fire; after which an entrance was made into the city and everything destroyed that could be found. Other writers think that a protracted siege occurred, which finally resulted in the king's burning the palace over his head. One thing only is certain, and that is that Nineveh fell, and never afterward recovered her former splendor.

However, in the absence of historic details, it may not be amiss to consult the prophets, those "forward-looking" historians, whose many predictions have been so strikingly verified in subsequent history.

The Prophet Nahum, the Elkoshite, about 660 B. C., when Assur-bani-pal was still at the height of his glory, predicted the destruction of Nineveh. And the Assyrian inscriptions enable us to fix the date of Nahum in a manner which leaves no room for dispute. They prove that the capture of Thebes, referred to by the prophet, took place about 663 B. C. Now, as the event was still fresh in Nahum's recollection, he could hardly have written later than 660 B. C. It was the cruel punishment of Thebes for its defection to the Ethiopians which suggested to Nahum the necessity of Nineveh's destruction. It is certainly a very noteworthy fact that the prophet not only foretold the fall of the city but the reason why the fall was a logical

¹ "Babylonian Life and History."

necessity. The Assyrian empire had become an intolerable despotism, and treated its conquered provinces in a way which demanded retribution. The following passage indicates how clearly the prophet saw the character of the Assyrians as well as the coming doom: "And all they that see thee shall flee from thee and say, Destroyed is Nineveh! who will condole with her? Whence shall I seek comforters for her? Art thou (O Nineveh!) better than No-of-Ammon, which was enthroned by the Nile-streams, surrounded by water; which was a fortress of the sea, whose wall was water? Ethiopia was her strength, and Egypt, and there was no end; Put and the Lubim were thy helpers. She, however, went as captive into exile; her children also were dashed in pieces at every street corner, and for her honored ones men cast lots, and all her great ones were bound in fetters. Thou also shalt be drunken, thou shalt faint away; thou also must seek a refuge because of an enemy."¹ Another prophet (Zephaniah), a contemporary of Jeremiah, clearly foretells the coming doom of Nineveh in the following line: "Every one that passeth by her shall hiss and wag his hand."²

Undoubtedly these prophecies were fulfilled to the very letter, for Xenophon and his ten thousand Greeks passed by the ruins of Nineveh in 401 B. C., a little over 200 years after the fall of the city, and mistook them for the remains of Median cities laid waste by the Persians. At this time the very name of the city had been forgotten. Even thirty years after the fall, the Prophet Ezekiel, in a passage remarkable for its eastern imagery, gives a picture of its desolation which leaves no doubt about the fact that the destruction had been complete. He contrasts the fallen city with its former splendor: "The Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon, with fair branches; all the trees of Eden that were in the garden of God envied him; but strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off; upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow and have left him."³

The former splendor to which the prophet refers may be imagined from the accounts of the classic writers, who declare the city was of vast extent, 480 stadia, or more than 60 miles, in circumference. Its walls were 100 feet high, broad enough for three chariots and furnished with 1,500 towers, each 200 feet in height. In the Book of Jonah it is described as an "exceeding great city of three days' journey,"⁴ and one "wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand,"⁵ referring probably to children or infants, and, if so, indicating very clearly a vast population. In any case, there can be no doubt about the importance and grandeur of Nineveh at the time of its destruction, and since the excavations begun by M. Botta in 1843, and subsequently continued by Mr. Layard, have been completed, quite enough has been recovered to make it evident that Nineveh was one of the most magnificent cities of ancient times.

And yet this great city came suddenly to an ignominious end, and the whole history of the case fitly illustrates the certainty of retributive justice, however long that justice may be delayed. With the fall of Nineveh went down the great Assyrian empire, an empire which had existed at least 1,200 years, and which had numbered among its rulers some of the greatest monarchs of antiquity.

The fall of such a city as Nineveh could not fail to change the face of Asia, and such a result actually followed. Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, was now advanced in years, but he was none the less ambitious to extend his empire, and consequently sent his son, Nebuchadnezzar, to recover the southern provinces from Pharaoh-Necho. A furious battle was fought near Carchemish, on the Euphrates (identified by George Smith with Jerablus), in which the Egyptians were utterly routed. A vivid prophetic description of this battle is given in Jeremiah, xlv, 3-12:

¹ Nahum iii, 7-11.² Zephaniah ii, 15.³ Ezekiel xxxi, 3, 9, 12.⁴ Jonah iii, 3.⁵ Jonah iv, 11.

3 Order thee the buckler and shield, and draw near to battle.

4 Harness the horses ; and get up, ye horsemen, and stand forth with *your* helmets ; furbish the spears, *and* put on the brigandines.

5 Wherefore have I seen them dismayed *and* turned away back ? and their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled apace, and look not back : *for* fear *was* round about, saith the Lord.

6 Let not the swift flee away, nor the mighty man escape ; they shall stumble, and fall toward the north by the river Euphrates.

7 Who *is* this *that* cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers ?

8 Egypt riseth up like a flood, and *his* waters are moved like the rivers ; and he saith, I will go up, *and* will cover the earth ; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof.

9 Come up, ye horses ; and rage, ye chariots ; and let the mighty men come forth ; the Ethiopians and the Libyans, that handle the shield ; and the Lydians, that handle *and* bend the bow.

10 For this *is* the day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries : and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood ; for the Lord God of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.

11 Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt : in vain shalt thou use many medicines ; *for* thou shalt not be cured.

12 The nations have heard of thy shame, and thy cry hath filled the land : for the mighty man hath stumbled against the mighty, *and* they are fallen both together.

So overwhelming was Necho's defeat that the power of Egypt in Asia was practically destroyed, and was subsequently never reëstablished. The issue of the battle at once gave great prestige to the name of Nebuchadnezzar, who, soon after the battle, returned to Babylon to succeed his father, whose death had just taken place. Nebuchadnezzar was crowned in 605 B. C., according to Jewish reckoning, or 604 B. C., according to Babylonian reckoning.¹

From this time we date the actual commencement of the new Chaldean empire, with which the fate of the Jews was so intimately connected as long as that empire existed.

Of course, it would be impossible to write a complete Bible history without including some account of the old Chaldean empire, for numerous references are made to this in many parts of the Bible. However, it will suffice our present purpose to indicate briefly some of the main points connected with its rise and progress.

As far back as Genesis, x, 8-10, we find a passage which almost certainly refers to Babylon. The words "Babel" and "Shinar" are sufficient to prove that "Babylon" and "Mesopotamia" are referred to, for "Babel" is frequently translated "Babylon," and "Mesopotamia" is probably an equivalent of "Shinar." This interpretation answers to the facts of the Bible as well as to the cuneiform inscriptions. Babylonia was the name given in ancient times to the flat country about the lower course of the Euphrates. In the Old Testament it is sometimes called the "land of the Chaldees." During the wider extension of the Babylonian dominion the name comprehended Assyria and Mesopotamia. The Mosaic accounts give as the founder

¹ CHRONOLOGY :

B. C.	
605	Ascension of Nebuchadnezzar. Captivity of Daniel.
598	Submission of Jehoiakim.
597	Captivity of Jehoiakim. Reign of Zedekiah commences.
593	Rebellion of Zedekiah.
589	Nebuchadnezzar comes to Riblah.
586	Destruction of Jerusalem. Capture of Zedekiah. Third Deportation of Jews.
562	Death of Nebuchadnezzar. Accession of Evil-Merodach.
560	Murder of Evil-Merodach. Nergal-Sharezer.
559	Accession of Cyrus to the Median empire.
556	Laborosoarchod. Nabonidus.
541	Belshazzar's first year.
538	Fall of Babylon. Darius the Mede.
536	First year of Cyrus' reign over Babylon and return of the Jews under Zerubbabel.

B. C.	
534	The foundation of the temple laid.
529	Cambyses.
522	Pseudo-Smerdis.
521	Darius Hystaspis.
516	Completion of the temple.
490	Battle of Marathon.
485	Accession of Xerxes.
480	Battles of Thermopylæ and Salamis.
465	Artaxerxes Longamanus.
458	Ezra's Mission to Jerusalem.
445	Nehemiah appointed governor.
432	Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem.
425	Xerxes II. and Sogdianus.
424	Darius II. Nothus.
405	Artaxerxes Mnemon and close of the Old Testament Canon.

of the kingdom Nimrod the Cushite, and Sir Henry Rawlinson has demonstrated from his discoveries among the cuneiform inscriptions that the Babylonians belonged to the Aramaic branch of the Semitic stock. It is believed that the Tower of Babel was built at Babylon during the reign of Nimrod, and this tower has been identified by Della Valle and Rennel as the tower of the Temple of Belus, which is still standing among the ruins of the ancient city.

Notwithstanding the prominent position which Babylon occupied in the ancient world very little is accurately known with regard to its early history. The first line of kings mentioned by Berosus is supposed to have reigned from 2234 B. C. to 1976 B. C. A new dynasty succeeded and continued until 1518 B. C. This change is believed to represent the conquest of Chedorlaomer, and the ascendancy of the Elamitic race. It is supposed that in the early period of Babylonian history Elam was a country of about equal power with Babylon, and occasionally exercised dominion over the latter, and that the Chedorlaomer referred to in Genesis xiv was at that time holding Babylon in subjection.

For almost twelve centuries after this period the history of Babylon is very obscure; but as far as is known it appears to have fallen under foreign dominion, particularly that of Assyria. However, a new line of Babylonian kings begins with Nabonassar, 747 B. C., who is stated by Berosus to have destroyed the annals of his predecessors in order that the Babylonians might be compelled to date from himself. The fourteenth name in this line is that of Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar.

This brief summary brings us again to the beginning of the new empire, which arose on the ruins of the Assyrian dynasty which ended with the destruction of Nineveh. And now that we are to study the history of the Jews during the Exile, in association with the new Chaldean empire, it becomes important that we should have before us a clearly defined idea of the character of the civilization which at that time existed in Babylon. It is fortunate that we are no longer left in doubt about this important matter. The Bible accounts were quite sufficient to show that the Babylonians had made considerable progress in reaching a high state of development in several directions, but now we have corroborative evidence of the most convincing character. The recently discovered cuneiform inscriptions demonstrate beyond the possibility of a doubt that no mean advance had been made in science, literature, general education, and the administration of justice. It is true that education and religion were mainly in the hands of priests, who formed a caste called "Chaldeans," which, however, was not hereditary, but was drawn from the body of the people. Even Daniel was taken into this caste, though he was a foreigner; which fact shows conclusively that the priests were not confined to an exclusive, bigoted sect. They seemed to have occupied themselves with astronomy and astrology as well as religion, and kept records from the earliest times of their astronomical observations, associating with these records the collegiate capacity, and their work evidently contributed largely to the solidarity and the general development of the Babylonian civilization.

As frequent reference will have to be made to the Chaldean empire during the period of the Exile, it is not necessary to follow Nebuchadnezzar and his successors any farther at present. If we date the empire from the accession of Nebuchadnezzar, the whole period of its existence is embraced within about sixty-six years, as Babylon was taken by Cyrus in 539 B. C., from which time what is known as the Persian empire took the place of the Chaldean.

But in closing this brief historical survey, it may be well to call special attention to the hand of providence, which is everywhere apparent in the facts connected with the great branches which empty into the general stream of Jewish history. And while we shall undoubtedly find the waters of this stream considerably affected by the character of its tributaries, we shall also find that even this emphasizes the supervising providence to which attention has been called. And if in the end we shall discover that all the rich treasures of wealth, of civilization, and of power, which we have found deposited in Babylon, have most unmistakably contributed

to the great purposes of God through the Jewish nation, it will then be no longer doubtful that a divine governorship has most potentially controlled all the affairs of the nations to the consummation of a great design, the complete unfolding of which will clearly indicate the glory of God and the best interests of the human race.

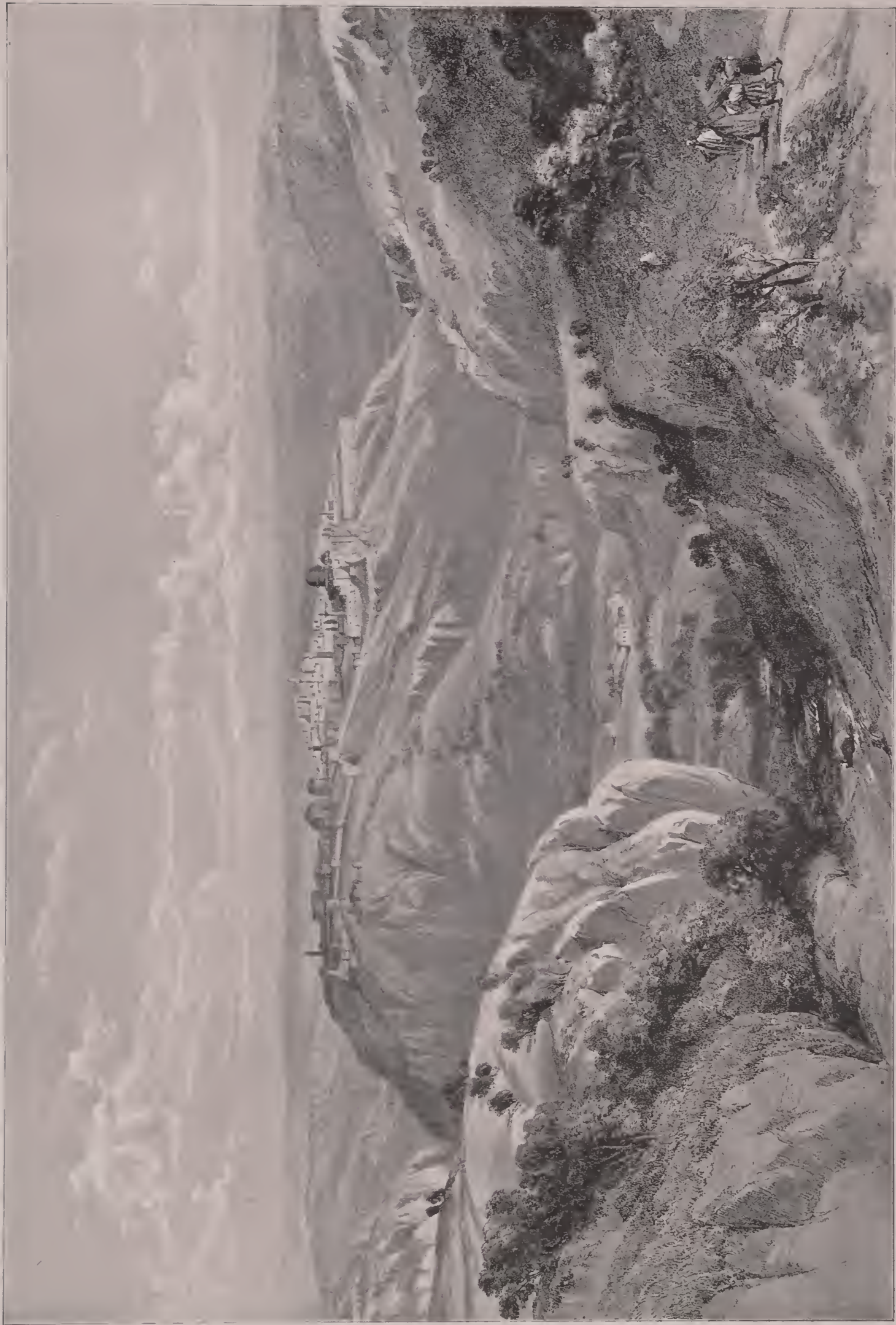
CHAPTER II.

LEAVING HOME.

THE destruction of Jerusalem was a sad blow to the hopes of the Jewish people. They had so long believed themselves to be the favorites of the Most High, and had so frequently been delivered by his strong and guiding hand, that when they found themselves at the mercy of Nebuchadnezzar they must have realized, as never before, how great was the sin which had brought upon them all their misfortunes. And yet all this had been foretold by their prophets. Even Isaiah had seen visions of the coming doom, and also the calm which should take place after the storm. But Jeremiah was the prophet to whom the people were most indebted for constant prophetic warnings as to what would assuredly come to pass if there was not a speedy return to the faith of their fathers. He first spoke to them through symbols, but finally with a literalness which left no doubt as to the meaning of his language. But it is an instructive commentary upon the perversity of human nature that little heed was given to the timely warnings of the great and good prophet. Indeed, the people became exasperated even when he spoke to them in symbols. When he likened Jerusalem to a "broken bottle," the last of his symbolic prophecies, there was at once aroused against him a bitter opposition, and this finally culminated in the chief officer of the temple smiting him and placing him in custody. But the prophet's courage seems to have increased in proportion to the opposition he encountered, for at last he not only speaks against Jerusalem, but he distinctly predicts that even Solomon's temple would become like the forsaken ruins at Shiloh.

There is nothing at all unusual in the irritation of the people on account of these forecasts of coming doom. Ungodly men never take pleasure in hearing of their unlawful deeds, but most of all they dislike to be told that they will be punished for these deeds. The spirit which rebels against good, right, and truth, is never the friend of reformers, and is sure to be vindictive against any righteous man who publicly demands reformation. It is human nature to paralyze the arm which chastises us for our evil-doing, if we can thereby break the force of the blows which were intended to fall upon us. And it is always a difficult task to persuade the proud that they are in any way exposed to danger. In fact, it is the testimony of all history that "pride goes before a fall"; and it is not strange, therefore, that the haughty Jews refused to heed the solemn calls to repentance and duty which were constantly iterated and reiterated by the prophets of God. Indeed, they no longer recognized in any real sense one of the factors of history to which attention has been called. They practically cut loose from God, and in doing so they made it impossible to continue their national existence in a land which had been given to them on certain conditions, which conditions they had repeatedly violated.

The doom finally came. All the prophecies were literally fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. And now the captives, taken at this time, began their long and weary march to the strange land in which they were to sojourn during the period of the Exile. It was a momentous hour in the history of this favored but often rebellious people. Perhaps no other people were ever more fondly attached to their own native land. It was the land of



DAVID ROBERTS.

JERUSALEM FROM THE SOUTH.

promise to them ; it was the land of milk and honey ; the land of their fathers, whose memory was always sweet, even in the days when God was almost forgotten.

No doubt the farewells were all the sadder because the misfortunes which had befallen them had already begun to revive the consciousness that their own sinfulness was the real cause of all their troubles. Affliction is a severe school, but it is the only school where we can learn to be strong, because afflictions lead us to introspection, and while this may bring with it sorrow, this sorrow works repentance, which need not to be regretted ; and it is highly probable that the captives, as they set out on their journey to Babylonia, had already begun to feel a sense of sinfulness which intensified their sorrow at having to bid farewell forever to all the sweet associations of home and their native land. In any case it cannot be doubted that the day of their departure brought with it many sad reflections in regard to the past as well as many dismal forebodings concerning the future. This subject has been treated in Book VIII, but its importance may justify some additional reflections.

We cannot be quite sure as to the exact number deported at this time. There were at least three distinct installments of captives, and probably four, carried off at different times : First, the young men taken in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim ; second, those removed with his successor, Jehoiachin ; and, third, those who accompanied Zedekiah after Jerusalem had been laid waste. There was also, according to Jeremiah, lii, 30, another deportation in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar. Some have supposed that this last deportation was carried away from Egypt.

As there is a little confusion about dates here, it may be well to clear the matter up at once. By reference to II. Kings and Jeremiah, we find that there were captives in the eighth and nineteenth years of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. But it must be remembered that these statements are in accordance with the Jewish reckoning of time ; according to the Babylonian reckoning, there were captives carried away in the seventh and eighteenth years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. Hence, there is no conflict at all when the difference of reckoning is taken into the account. There is, however, a further difficulty with respect to II. Kings and Jeremiah. We do not know who wrote the Books of Kings, as they bear no author's name. They appear, however, to have been written in Judah before the Exile. Even Canon Driver admits this much. The Book of Jeremiah belongs to the same place and time. But in the last chapter of II. Kings, and the last of Jeremiah, the closing verses in both cases are evidently of a later date than either of the books, and were probably written by the same hand, as the records are substantially the same. These verses relate what took place in Babylon many years after Jerusalem was destroyed ; and it is probable, therefore, that they have a Babylonian origin. This is especially true of the last four verses of Kings, and the last seven of Jeremiah. Now, with this fact before us, there is no difficulty whatever about the dates. At once it can be seen that the passages which place the captivities in the eighth and nineteenth years of Nebuchadnezzar have a Jewish origin before the Exile, and, therefore, use the Jewish reckoning ; while those which speak of the seventh and eighteenth years have a Babylonian origin, and consequently use the computation employed in that country. In short, the eighth and nineteenth years, according to Jewish style, are exactly the same as the seventh and eighteenth according to the Babylonian method of computation.

It is interesting to note just how these respective reckonings were made. The Jews computed a king's reign from the day of his accession to the day of his death, and they included every year in which any part of the reign could be properly located. To illustrate this method, let us suppose that one month of the year had yet to run when a king began his reign, and suppose he continued through the whole of another year, but remained on the throne only one month of a third year ; in such a case he would be regarded as reigning three years, although he would be king for only fourteen months. But the cuneiform inscriptions tell us that the

Babylonians reckoned in an entirely different manner. They would not, in the supposed case, have counted that month of the first year to the king at all; it would have been given to his predecessor, while the first year of the new king would have begun at the New Year's Day after he came to the throne, and the following year would have been counted as a whole year to him, although in that year he had only been in office a single month. Whoever was on the throne when the year came in, to him it was reckoned, whether he continued to reign to the close of the year or not. There is, therefore, no occasion whatever for assuming a conflict between the Bible and the tablets as respects the times when the different deportations of captives were made. Nor is there the slightest difficulty in reconciling the apparent conflict of dates between Daniel, Jeremiah, and II. Kings. Jeremiah and II. Kings use the Jewish reckoning, except in the verses already explained, while Daniel uses the Babylonian reckoning; and the fact that the latter follows the Babylonian style is very strong proof that the Book of Daniel was written in Babylon during the Captivity. Had it been written, as some allege, many years after the Return, it is highly probable that the Jewish reckoning, as regards the reign of kings, would have been adopted. But no matter how this may have been, there can be no reasonable doubt about the fact that what has been supposed to be an irreconcilable conflict is shown by the tablets to be no conflict at all, as all the dates with respect to Nebuchadnezzar, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah are easily reconciled, taking into the account the different reckonings to which attention has been called.

As other chronological difficulties must necessarily soon be encountered, it may be well to settle these at once while the matter is under consideration. The date of the Book of Daniel has been contested, and its historical authority questioned on the ground that there is an apparent confusion in the statements contained in chapter i, 5, 18, and chapter ii, 1. Some critics have contended that it is impossible to reconcile the "three years" and the "second year" in these passages, and have, therefore, reached the conclusion that the Book of Daniel is untrustworthy, if not unhistorical. Others, who have been unwilling to admit either of these conclusions, have sought by ingenious devices to show how Daniel could be brought to Babylon, be nourished three years, and still be only in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign; and yet it is conceded that Daniel was carried away to Babylon during the first year of that reign. These clever methods have served only to darken counsel. However, since we have been able to read clearly the cuneiform inscriptions all difficulty has disappeared. "These show not only how, at the end of three years, Daniel might be in the second year of the reign, but they show also how he could not be in any other." As Nebuchadnezzar ascended the throne in 605 B. C., his "first year," according to the Babylonian method of counting — which is the method of the Book of Daniel — was 604, and his second year was 603, the very year in which Daniel's training ended, according to the statement of the book. Consequently, we have another striking illustration of how a proper understanding of the difference in Jewish and Babylonian reckoning at once dissipates apparently irreconcilable difficulties.

Another misunderstanding arises from the statement of Berosus, a Chaldean historian, who is quoted by Josephus, to the effect that Nebuchadnezzar heard of his father's death when he was in the first western campaign, and hastened home to secure his crown; and then Berosus goes on to say that Nebuchadnezzar reigned forty-three years and was succeeded by his son, Evil-Merodach. But in II. Kings, xxv, 27, it is said that Evil-Merodach began to reign in the thirty-seventh year of Jehoiachin's captivity. From this statement the conclusion is easily drawn that Nebuchadnezzar's forty-third year, or the year in which he died, was the thirty-seventh of Jehoiachin's captivity. Now, all this is cleared up when we remember that Berosus and the author of the last verses of II. Kings, writing from a Babylonian point of view, called the year in which a king begins to reign not his "first" but his "accession year," and counted his "first" year from the next New Year's Day; while Jeremiah and the author of the earlier

CHAPTER III.

IN A STRANGE LAND.

THE Captivity was more than an episode in Jewish history ; it was a strongly marked turning point, where the stream was arrested for a while, but afterward it flowed on again in a somewhat different direction. It was not intended as a mere punishment for sins, but for correction, for reproof, for growth, for the development of new forces under the influence of discipline. This is the view constantly set forth by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and, indeed, all the teachers of the time. It was no doubt a night of weeping, but it was that which preceded the joy of the morning. Punishment for sins was unquestionably the immediate object of the Captivity, but the ulterior object was the reformation of the people and their restoration to the divine favor, as well as their return to their native land.

It must never be forgotten that they were God's chosen people — his covenanted people ; and consequently his chastisement of them was as a father's chastisement of his children. Every stroke laid upon them was for their good and was intended to "work the peaceable fruit of righteousness" to them who were "exercised thereby." God is not concerned only with the physical comfort and growth of a people ; his chief concern is their moral and religious development. From his point of view there can be no really substantial growth where sin dominates the life. And this fact alone is quite sufficient to explain his dealings with the Jewish people. Their sin interposed between them and him like a mountain, and it was, therefore, absolutely essential that this mountain should be rolled away before a reconciliation could take place. And even reconciliation would have been of little account without the prior discipline through which the people had to pass. Chastisement is never helpful if it simply irritates ; it leaves the chastised worse than before. Consequently, chastisement must be wise enough, severe enough, and long enough to yield the fruit intended to be produced by it. This fruit may not always follow as a result, and in such a case the chastisement has failed, and then the subject of it is irretrievably lost. But in all cases the divine chastisements are intended for our good, and if we do not profit by them the fault is ours and not that of our Heavenly Father.

It may be well to say that there is nothing in this method contrary to the laws of nature. Friction is a law of physical development, and chastisements are frequently the only way to purity, strength, and growth. The atmosphere is kept pure by the force of the wind ; strength is imparted to the arm by constant exercise ; while growth of all physical things can be secured only by the struggle produced by opposing forces. Mental superiority is secured in the same way. Where there is no friction there is really no growth. The greatest men and women are usually found within that comparatively narrow belt of the earth where the seasons are in constant conflict and where all the currents of nature are more or less running contrary to one another.

The law of moral and religious development is only the physical and mental law lifted to a higher plane and wider significance. We have already seen that the divine element cannot be eliminated from human history ; for without the divine the human is an insoluble problem. It is equally true that the moral or religious cannot be separated from the physical ; for man without a conscience, sensitive to good, right, and truth, would be a human monster and could have no legitimate place in any governmental or social scheme which promises ultimate success.

Nor was there anything in the chastisement which the Jews received contrary to the covenant which God had made with them. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." But it should be remembered that every covenant implies at



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least two parties to it, and that a violation of the covenant by one party at once releases the other party. God's covenant with his chosen people contains certain conditions which the people were bound to observe, if they continued to claim the promises vouchsafed in the covenant. A failure to observe faithfully these conditions would at once release Jehovah from the promises which he had made. This fact is forcibly illustrated in the case of the covenant which God made with Israel in respect to the land of Canaan. In that covenant it was definitely stipulated that all the Canaanites should be driven from the land. But there were certain conditions in the covenant which the people were bound to observe. It was stipulated that the Israelites should be "very courageous to keep and do all that is written in the law of Moses," and should "turn not aside therefrom to the right hand nor to the left." And it was further enjoined that they should not mingle among the Canaanites nor intermarry with them, nor even mention the name of their gods. And in case these conditions should not be observed it was distinctly declared that the Lord would not drive out the nations, as he had before promised when he made the covenant concerning the land which he would give the children of Israel; but that these Canaanites should remain as "snares" and "traps" and "scourges" and "thorns" until the Israelites should perish from off the good land which the Lord God had given them.¹ In the second and third chapters of Judges we have the sequel to the solemn statements in Joshua. That sequel shows conclusively that the people did violate the conditions of the covenant which Jehovah made with them, and consequently he was no longer under obligation to fulfill his promises; and as a matter of fact he did not drive out all the Canaanites, but left a remnant for the very purpose he had indicated when he repeated his covenant just before the death of Joshua.

There is nothing, therefore, in God's dealings with the Jewish people, as regards the Captivity, which violated his covenant with his people. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy there is a summary of the blessings and curses with respect to Israel. Certain blessings are promised to follow the hearkening to the voice of the Lord and the doing of his commandments, while a failure to hearken and do is to be followed by certain curses, among which may be mentioned the very chastisement which is now under consideration, for the chapter in Deuteronomy distinctly forecasts the exact state of things which took place during the Captivity.

In view of the foregoing facts, it must be at once evident that Jehovah was no longer bound by the covenant which he made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and which was repeated to Moses and Joshua, with respect to the land of Canaan. Humanly speaking, he had not only the right to deliver the people over to the Babylonian Captivity, but he was under no obligation whatever to allow them to return to their native land. Whatever privileges, therefore, the Hebrews enjoyed after their rebellion, were purely of God's favor, and not because he was bound by the covenant he had made with them. And this fact is very precious as showing how superabounding is divine grace. And it shows also how our Heavenly Father becomes attached to those whom he has once recognized as his own. He did not forsake his people entirely, though they did forsake him. He did chastise them, but he did not cast them off forever.

The Captivity, therefore, had a threefold purpose. (1) It was intended as a punishment for the oft-repeated sins of the people. (2) As a means by which to prepare the people for a renewal of their allegiance to the God of their fathers. (3) As a lesson to us upon whom the "end of the ages has come."

As already remarked, the Jews had forsaken God, had given themselves over to wickedness, and had disregarded all the warnings of the prophets. And not only so, but they had persecuted the very men whom God had appointed to urge them to escape from the impending

¹ Joshua xxiii, 4-14.

ruin. Nothing could have exceeded the persistent obstinacy of their rebellion against God. And yet they ought to have known that without his constant protection they were sure to come to final disaster. God is long-suffering, but the time of his reckoning cannot be indefinitely delayed. In the case of the Jews it came none too soon to make it possible to perpetuate the national existence, even for the short period which followed the Return. Nor could anything be done at all without the period of the Exile. It was a necessary break in the stream of Jewish history, a sort of sinking of the river, until the seventy years relating to the Captivity were consummated, when it would again flow on with its waters somewhat modified by the inflowing currents which it would receive by coming in contact with Babylonian habits and customs.

This very fact may account for the absence of details with respect to the history of the people during the Captivity. In studying the period of the Exile one is disappointed in finding so little trustworthy material concerning the life of the Jews in Babylonia. And yet it was probably the design of Providence that this whole period should be practically buried in oblivion. We have only a few glimpses of what actually took place. We know that Daniel and the three Hebrew worthies, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (afterward called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego), were carried away with the first deportation, and, after reaching Babylon, were educated there for special service under the king; and we know, furthermore, that Ezekiel was carried away with the second deportation and became the chief prophet during the Exile. But we know very little of what really took place among the people themselves, or just how their time was employed during the days of their captivity.

Five years after the first detachment had been settled in Babylonia, Jeremiah wrote from Jerusalem a remarkable letter to the elders, priests, and prophets who had been carried away with this detachment by Nebuchadnezzar. The first portion of this epistle is as follows: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all the captivity, whom I have caused to be carried away captive from Jerusalem unto Babylon: Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply ye there, and be not diminished. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Let not your prophets that be in the midst of you, and your diviners, deceive you, neither hearken ye to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the Lord. For thus saith the Lord, After seventy years be accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you hope in your latter end. And ye shall call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord, and I will turn again your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again unto the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive."¹

These words clearly indicate at least three things: (1) A clear insight into something of the actual life of the captives; (2) the length of time the Captivity was to last; (3) the certainty of the Return at the end of the period mentioned. They also make it perfectly plain that the exiles had fixed residences allotted to them, that they were engaged in the cultivation of the soil, and that they had among them some prescribed form of worship. Indeed, it is very probable that the exile communities were governed by their own officers, though these in turn were

¹ Jeremiah xxix, 4-14 (Revised Version).

subject to the Babylonian government. At any rate, it cannot be doubted that the exiles finally took up the position of colonists rather than of captives. Those among them who were well educated, or who were trained artisans, were placed in important positions, while only the unskilled workmen were specially oppressed. In view of this fact some have thought that the condition of the people was improved rather than otherwise by their captivity, and hence it is difficult to understand wherein the chastisement consisted. But there are at least three things to be said about this. First of all, the heavy part of the chastisement came at the destruction of Jerusalem. In the second place, another part was inflicted when they were carried away from their native land, and in the third place they were, during the Exile, in an actual state of servitude, notwithstanding they may have been allowed considerable privileges in managing their own private affairs. The fact that they were not driven under the lash as slaves all the time does not prove that their position was a desirable one. Liberty with a thousand disadvantages is worth more than bondage with a thousand privileges. These privileges, however great, are all bound in chains, and chains must always gall the hands and feet of those who have had a taste of freedom. The Jews were patriotic, however much they may have failed in other things; and they had been taught to regard themselves as the most favored people of all the earth. It must have been, therefore, a very trying thing for them when they found themselves in a strange land and subject to the caprices of a foreign despotic government.

It is probably true, as already intimated, that their treatment was not as severe as captives usually received. Nebuchadnezzar was, in many respects, a wise ruler, and he evidently sought to make his captives contribute to the glory of his reign. He soon found that they were remarkably capable in many things wherein his own people needed instruction, and he was not slow to use their services whenever and wherever this could be done to the advantage of himself or his own subjects. At the same time it is very certain that the unskilled artisans were subjected to the hardest kind of menial labor, while those who were well educated, or skilled artisans, though perhaps more favored in some respects, were, nevertheless, all the time conscious of their peculiar environment and the constant disadvantages under which they labored.

There were different settlements, as there had been different deportations. We know that Ezekiel was with "them of the captivity at Tel-Abib that dwell by the river Chebar" and that it was here that God first showed this prophet what is called the "rule of prophecy." It is clear from the Book of Ezekiel that, at least on the river Chebar, there were "elders" over the people, and that these elders formed a distinct class, one of whom was probably reckoned as chief. However, all were not allowed to remain in these organized communities. Some of the most promising young men were taken to the city of Babylon itself and there employed as painters, carvers, musicians, etc. Some of these contributed by their skill in beautifying the king's palaces and public buildings. Others were instructed in all the culture of the Chaldees, and then used in positions of responsibility, and even authority. So that, whether maintaining well-organized communities or operating as individuals, the remarkable tenacity, ability, energy, and influence which have always characterized the Jewish race were prominently present during the whole period of the Captivity.

The religious life of the Jews, while they were in Babylonia, was certainly not very pronounced; but this was not the fault of their teachers. However, religious enthusiasm could not have been reasonably expected, for environment has much to do with religion as well as other things. Their worship had been exclusively associated with the temple at Jerusalem, and now that the temple was destroyed, it is easy to see that they would, for a time at least, be at sea almost, without chart or compass, with respect to the means of spiritual development. But they were not left helpless nor hopeless on account of the loss of their temple and their exile in a strange land. God gave them prophets to teach them so that the religious flame would not be entirely exhausted. The dawn of the Exile was the beginning of the prophetic period. The

preëxilic prophets were Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and Isaiah; the prophets of the Exile were Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Habakkuk, and Obadiah. Daniel was not placed by the Jews among the prophets at all, but among the Hagiographa. The position of Jonah is somewhat uncertain. The post-exilic prophets were Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Nothing, perhaps, distinguishes the period of Jewish history, from King Hezekiah to Malachi, more than the influence of the prophets of God. Before the Exile, Israel was a nation, after the Exile it became almost a church. In short, religion, which had been somewhat discontinued during the reign of the kings, reappeared with increased intensity during the reign of the prophets. While the kingdom was gradually falling to pieces, the preëxilic prophets were warning, instructing, exhorting, and trying to inspire their fellow-countrymen with the notion that even the worship of the true God was simple mockery if it was not associated with righteous living. Even the character of Jehovah himself received a new interpretation in the teaching of the prophets. During the Exile a deeper and keener sense of sin was undoubtedly experienced, while Jehovah became more and more the God of righteousness rather than the God of his people.

Reference has already been made to the part which Jeremiah took in matters at Jerusalem, both before and after the fall of the city. The influence of his teaching was no doubt very great on the exiles. His writings were taken with them, and he wrote letters to some of them after they had been carried away into captivity. Indeed, it is probable the Book of Jeremiah was finally put into its present form by some one of the captives, for there is very strong evidence that at least a portion of the last chapter was composed in Babylonia. One evidence of this has already been referred to, namely, the use of the Babylonian reckoning of time in reference to the reign of kings.

Of the prophets of the Exile, Ezekiel occupies a most conspicuous place; and a careful study of his writings helps us to understand the condition of the people while they were in Babylonia. Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem he had given the keynote of what was to be the new music of the Jewish people. The children were no longer to have their teeth put on edge because their fathers ate sour grapes. In the new society, to which the prophet constantly looked, individual responsibility would occupy a prominent place. All would know the Lord, from the least to the greatest. Flesh would no longer count, but personal character would be respected everywhere.

For some time the prophet's mouth was closed, but when his enforced silence was broken, he continued to prophesy and labor among the people from 586 to 570 B. C., and during this period his eyes were turned mainly to the future. He no longer seems to regard the past with any special interest. No doubt, realizing that what was ended could not be mended, he seeks to inspire hope in the hearts of his countrymen and to encourage them to prepare for the return to their native land, the rebuilding of the temple, and the organization of the new society which he dimly foreshadows as coming up out of the desolation which then everywhere prevailed in Judea.

The prophecy concerning the new future, with all that appertained to the settlement of the land and the rebuilding of the temple, extends from chapter thirty-three to chapter forty-eight, and forms a complete treatise on the important matters referred to. As a priest, Ezekiel would be specially interested in everything pertaining to the temple. It is not surprising, therefore, that he makes it the chief figure in his great scheme for restoration. It is the description of an architect. Every feature is distinctly drawn and everything is carefully "measured." And this fact emphasizes the probability that the prophet's vision relates to the new temple which was to be built on Mount Moriah after the Captivity terminated. Some writers have supposed that this vision of Ezekiel relates to the Messianic period, and probably to a time yet to come. But there is certainly no good reason for such a conclusion. The one great fact which was

constantly present with the prophet at the time of this vision was the return of the exiles to Jerusalem, and nothing could have been more inspiring to those who still retained religious convictions than the thought that the temple would be rebuilt and its venerated worship restored. And in view of this fact it seems reasonable that Ezekiel would use the powerful incentive supplied in this prospect to encourage his countrymen to get ready for the Return. In any case it seems improbable that he would attempt to create hopes which he knew could never be realized within the near future.

However, it is not improbable that Ezekiel's temple may have a still further significance than that which limits it to the building erected by Zerubbabel and his associates. Very many of the prophecies have a much more extended meaning than what seems to be their immediate aim. Specific time is very seldom an important factor with the writers of the Bible. Even Christ and his apostles spoke of events near at hand with an ulterior reach which actually extended to the end of the Christian dispensation. This peculiarity characterizes nearly all the prophets. They saw things in doubles. What was perhaps the main event in their vision lay very near to them, but in its reflection they saw similar events very far in the distance. There is no doubt that there is a Messianic coloring in the whole of Ezekiel's forecast with respect to the prospective fortunes of the Jewish people. His words were specially intended to encourage, strengthen, and give hope as regarded the immediate future, though this did not preclude the possibility of his predictions having a much farther reach in their ulterior design than the mere restoration of the Jews to their native land, the rebuilding of the temple, and the organization of a somewhat new order of things.

It is one of the proofs of Ezekiel's inspiration that he continued to take an optimistic view of the future, notwithstanding the cold indifference with which his earnest teaching was received by the exiles. Doubtless some of them were favorably impressed by what he taught them, with respect to both the present and the future; but it is very evident, from the prophet's own words, as well as from corroborative testimony, that his prophecies were treated in somewhat the same manner as Jeremiah's had been by some of the same exiles before the destruction of Jerusalem, and also by the remnant which remained after the exiles had been deported to Babylon.

It must be remembered that even before the destruction of Jerusalem, Ezekiel had fully corroborated the truth of what Jeremiah had predicted concerning that city and many other things. But it was not until afterward that he gave vent to his feelings in a series of prophecies with respect to the punishment of the nations which had oppressed Israel.

It was about fourteen years after Jerusalem was destroyed, being the twentieth year of his prophetic ministry, that Ezekiel began to prophesy in detail concerning the return of the captives. Fully thirty years had yet to expire before the time fixed for the Return would be fulfilled. And now it was that the prophet's faith seemed to reach its highest point; and yet he had everything to discourage him, when he considered the condition of the people around him. Most of his countrymen received his words of hope with little more than indifference; and as to any real preparation for the new society to which he was constantly calling attention, there was practically no sign at all. Indeed, some of the exiles had listened willingly to false prophets, and not a few even at this time were ready to give heed to almost anything except the truth.

It is a curious fact, with respect to human nature, that when a season of depression comes false suggestions are generally welcomed rather than those that are true. At least this is the case until a certain point in experience has been reached. And it is precisely this fact which makes the earlier hours of a trial very dangerous. During that period the fleshly nature is still not only not dormant but has all of its susceptibilities quickened by the very fires through which it is passing. The hour of spiritual domination does not come until the flesh is conquered; and when this point is reached, we may be sure the time of deliverance has arrived, if now the truth is presented with all its regenerative power. When Ezekiel delivered



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his last prophecies the exiles were still in the first stage of the trial through which they were passing, and they were, therefore, ready to listen to any suggestions of evil rather than the wise words of counsel and comfort which the prophet of God so earnestly proclaimed to them. When once he had fairly set his face to the future, he seems to have scarcely ever looked back.

After Ezekiel finishes his picture of the coming temple he introduces what is, after all, the essential thing in the whole matter. Without the presence of Jehovah in the new house it would be of no practical use. During the Captivity the only temple in which he could dwell was the consecrated heart, and it is very probable that very few hearts were prepared to receive him or were ready to welcome his presence. And then, it must be remembered that the Jews had been taught to regard Jehovah objectively rather than subjectively. They had learned to look for him in their temple, and it was therefore a strong point in the prophet's vision that the holy Shechina should enter the new temple and occupy the place above the Mercy Seat, and between the Cherubim. Whatever else the people were indisposed to regard with favor they were certainly not indifferent to such an assurance as this; and it can be easily imagined that this promise of the divine presence in the rebuilt temple did much to inspire the exiles with the hope that a new era would certainly soon dawn upon their history.

It is probable that during the Exile special places of worship were provided; and it is almost certain that these places were the beginnings of the synagogues which in subsequent years occupied such a prominent place among the Jews. The chief men of the Exile undoubtedly gave much attention to the study of the law, and whether the "Priestly Code" was originated at this time or not, it is probable that it received a very distinct emphasis, as without the temple service there was room for the special application of such a code in the government and religious development of the people. It is true that the legislation contained in Ezekiel is very different in some respects from the Levitical, but this only shows that the Exile was intended to be a distinct break in the regular flow of Jewish history; and this fact has not received the attention it deserves from writers who have sought to treat comprehensively that history from beginning to end. It would have been contrary to the purpose of God, if the Exile had failed to produce the very changes which have been thought to be somewhat remarkable. Indeed, the remarkable thing is that the changes were not far greater than they were. No other nation was ever subjected to anything like the same severe trial, and afterward maintained its national existence or even retained many of its national characteristics. The very fact that the land was left desolate for so long a time was enough, of itself, to make it impossible to restore the old order of things in every particular. Indeed, the old order would not have satisfied the new conditions, for not only had the people themselves changed, but everything had more or less changed during the Captivity. Contact with the Chaldeans had not failed to do its work. And although the Jews were kept in somewhat separate communities and maintained, to a certain extent, their ancient manners and customs, there is no doubt, from numerous references in the Prophets of the period, that not a few had "learned the way of the heathen" and even worshiped the gods of Babylonia.

The other important prophets of the Exile were Zephaniah, Habakkuk, and Obadiah. The prophecy of the first of these embraces a denunciation of the idolatry of Judah, and a forecast of judgment; a call on the nations around to repent if they were to escape; and finally promises that Zion shall have a day of restoration after the judgment of the wicked nations is past. The prophecy of the second of these is an appeal to Jehovah, in which the prophet asks how long the Most High will suffer his own people to be subjected to the Chaldean tyranny. The prophet then stands upon the watch and waits for the answer. This finally comes with an assurance that while "the just shall live by his faith," the Chaldean scourge shall be removed, and the oppressors ultimately destroyed. Finally, the miraculous deliverances of the past, in

the history of Israel, are pointed to as assurances that God will take care of his people in the future by prostrating their enemies and bringing salvation to his chosen ones.

Obadiah refers to the punishment of Moab, Ammon, and Edom by Nebuchadnezzar, Judas Maccabeus, John Hyrcanus, and Simeon of Gerasa. Some parts of Obadiah's prophecy remain yet unfulfilled, and hence his words are very carefully studied by the Jews of the present time, as it is supposed the prophet refers to an important period in Jewish history which still belongs to the future.

In closing this brief sketch of the prophets who belonged specially to the Exile, it may be well to notice the remarkable providence which is clearly indicated in the character and work of these noble and consecrated leaders of the people, during a time when their presence and help were most needed. The Jews were in a strange land, and though enjoying some privileges, they were, upon the whole, placed at great disadvantage with respect to many things. And perhaps the greatest difficulty with which they had to contend was that which arose from the complete breaking up of their traditional worship. The law was of little use to them while they were in captivity, for the law was mainly intended to regulate their conduct toward one another when in their own land and when preserving their national solidarity. Just at the time when the law could no longer help them the prophets stepped in and supplied what the law could not give. They not only taught the people, but inspired them by their personal presence and self-abnegation to become heroes in suffering; and by patient waiting to learn "how sublime a thing it is to suffer and be strong."

In view of this wonderful provision of providence in the case of the Jews, surely no one can doubt that there is a "divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will"; and it must be, furthermore, evident that Jewish history, at least, cannot be read aright without recognizing in it the divine factor which has already been emphasized as necessary to any intelligible understanding of human affairs. Indeed, it is impossible to study the period of the Exile and Return without being forced to the conclusion that a greater than any of the prophets was all the time guiding, controlling, and determining the course of things.

CHAPTER IV.

BABYLONIAN RULERS, LAWS, AND CUSTOMS.

REFERENCE has already been made to the rise of the Chaldean empire; and though that empire was of comparatively short duration, it was the empire with which the exiles must always be most intimately associated. Hence, no satisfactory treatment of the Captivity is possible without a prior understanding of the civilization which prevailed in Babylonia at that time. We must know something of the men, laws, habits, and customs of the country where the captives were located in order to have any just conception of the probable influence of the Captivity on the Jewish people; and it is a matter for congratulation that recent discoveries have brought the ancient Chaldean civilization within the realm of legitimate history; consequently, in reaching trustworthy conclusions, we are no longer in doubt as to the main facts involved. In a most wonderful way the cuneiform inscriptions have corroborated the testimony of the Bible with respect to many things, while with respect to others these inscriptions have helped us where the Bible is silent. Indeed, it is impossible to estimate the historical value of the discoveries of the past half-century in throwing new light upon the period of the Exile.

We now understand many of the minutest details of social life among the Assyrians and Babylonians, and these details furnish us an excellent background in which to study the picture of Jewish life during the Captivity.

The controlling forces of the period under consideration were not unlike those of other periods in the world's history. Personality was the great potential factor. Laws were effective only as they became the embodiment of personal conceptions of duty and progress. In fact, the personal element entered into government at that time much more prominently than it does at present, though there can be little doubt that law was revered for itself, and had certain sanctions which could not be safely ignored even by the autocratic rulers of the people. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that personality was the dominant influence with respect to all that entered into the Babylonian civilization. And it will scarcely be questioned by anyone that Nebuchadnezzar was by far the greatest personality among the Chaldeans at the time of the Exile. It will, therefore, be instructive, as well as interesting, to study some of his chief characteristics, as such a study will enable us to have a clearer understanding of the environment of the captives than could be obtained in any other way. He it was who assigned to them their places in Babylonia, and to him they were most indebted for whatever privileges they enjoyed or for whatever suffering they endured. In short, he was the leading spirit of Babylonia during the greater part of the Exile period, especially if we count all the deportations — which we certainly have a right to do, as we are now dealing with all the captives.

Another important point will be gained in studying the character of Nebuchadnezzar. He was no doubt a representative person of his period. Perhaps he was far above his people in character as he was in position. But it is probable we shall not go far astray if we take him as a type of that which was best in the Babylonian civilization. In any case, if we can know something of what he was, this will help us to reproduce the age in which he lived, and a vision of this age will at once reveal the peculiar environment of the Jewish people during the period of their exile. Some of his prominent characteristics may be enumerated as follows :

(1) His religiousness. In this he was not specially peculiar. It is probable that no great character can be found in all history that has not underlying it a strong religious element. A belief in the supernatural is really essential to any great success in life. Rationalists may deride this notion, but, after all, their own success, if they have any, will depend upon the very thing they pretend to reject. As a matter of fact, it often happens that those who affect to ridicule the supernatural do so at the expense of the most potent influence in the formation of their own characters. Indeed, many Rationalists apply their rationalism to others while they have little or no use for it in their own case, except so far as it helps to make their contention plausible with respect to others. But, however this may be, it is certain that the supernatural is fundamental in the development of any great character; and this fact again emphasizes the importance of studying history with God and man both included in it.

Of course, it is not necessary to include our conception of God in order to recognize the influence of the supernatural. The supernatural has received very many different embodiments. Nebuchadnezzar's was very different from our own, but, nevertheless, he was a strong believer in some occult power or powers over the affairs of human life and destiny. While it is probable he had some knowledge of the true God and was at times a monotheist, it cannot be doubted that he was a worshiper of idols, and was, for the most part, a polytheist, and consequently the patron of many gods. In short, as has been remarked of him, he was "faithful to the orthodoxy of his day."

(2) And this fact at once introduces us to another side of his nature. He was intensely conservative. Some might attribute his faithfulness to the orthodoxy of his day to a discreet policy; but there is no reason to believe that he was not thoroughly conscientious in his religious convictions. He was no doubt too wise a statesman rudely to shock his people by

making an attack upon their gods, as Nabonidus subsequently did; but it is highly probable he had no wish to do this even if such a course could have been justified from a political point of view. He seems to have been really religious at heart, and consequently his devotion to the gods must be regarded as a prominent characteristic rather than a political expedient.

It would be easy to furnish abundant proof in support of the foregoing estimate of his character. It is, however, necessary to mention only one or two facts. The name which he adopted for himself was the "Heaven-adoring King," and he usually gave prominence to some god in all his inscriptions. At the same time, he constantly recognized that his life and success were the results of divine favor. He expressed his gratitude to the gods in various ways; among which may be mentioned praises and invocations, presentation of offerings, the building and repairing of temples, adornment of shrines, processions, and the proclamation of each god by his proper titles. Merodach seems to have been his favorite god, and he speaks of him as "accepting the devotion of his heart." Surely these references, as well as many others that might be given, make it impossible for us to doubt the sincerity of Nebuchadnezzar's devotion to the gods.

(3) But his religion was deeply tinged with superstition. An illustration of this may be found in Ezekiel, xxi, 21, 22. Having come on his march to a certain point where the road parted, he resorted to divination in order to determine whether he should take the right-hand road, leading toward Jerusalem, or the left-hand, leading toward Rabbath of Ammon. The result of his incantations led him to take the former road; consequently, the decision which determined his attack upon Jerusalem at that time depended upon the shaking of arrows, the consulting of images and the appearance of the entrails of victims. This fact is very suggestive when considered from another point of view. Are we not justified in concluding that the God of all the earth used this superstitious tendency of the Chaldean king to carry out the divine purposes in reference to Jerusalem, and bring about the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning that city? It is undoubtedly in accordance with the methods of our Heavenly Father to make the wrath of men to praise him, and we know also that he uses the foolishness of men in order to show forth his own matchless wisdom. In any case, it is certainly remarkable that one of the most important events of the world's history was practically decided by such a curious incident as that which has been related. Nothing could demonstrate more effectively the importance of little things in the affairs of this world. We know that the destiny of empires has often hung upon apparently insignificant trifles. And the case under consideration very strikingly shows that at least the destiny of Jerusalem hung on the direction toward which the omens pointed when the Chaldean king consulted them at the "parting of the ways."

There are other evidences of Nebuchadnezzar's superstition. It is shown on the Barsippa cylinder that he would not allow himself to commence the work of restoring the Temple of the Seven Spheres until he had first waited for "a fortunate month" and an "auspicious day" of that month. Some writers have contended that superstition was a characteristic of all the Babylonian kings; but there is really very little evidence to be found of this anywhere. Nevertheless, whether this was true of others or not, it is certain that Nebuchadnezzar's character was greatly affected by a superstitious religiousness, and that this was fundamental in many of the great successes which he achieved. Napoleon Bonaparte was a man of destiny. Much of his strength was in his belief that he was supernaturally directed. And so it has been with nearly all the great leaders of human action. It is not strange, therefore, considering the age in which he lived, that the great Chaldean king found his reverence for the gods a source of strength and influence.

(4) He was also distinguished for courage, sagacity, and energy. These qualities entered largely into his successful generalship. He was a born commander of forces. He also possessed the quality of prompt decision. He always led his armies in person, and never failed to press

his campaigns with the utmost vigor. Nor was he easily discouraged. The long siege of Tyre no doubt tried his patience very severely, but he refused to be baffled by even a thirteen-years' resistance. The city at last fell in 577 B. C., and its desolation ever since has answered exactly the predictions of the prophets of God.

There is certainly no reason for placing Nebuchadnezzar among the world's greatest commanders of armies, as some writers have done; but there is good reason for placing him among the ablest commanders of the day in which he lived. He was nearly always successful in his military campaigns, and success is the only standard which is worth anything in testing military ability. However, it would be untruthful to attribute all Nebuchadnezzar's success to his own great ability. He was no doubt the chosen instrument for the execution of the divine purposes with respect to the surrounding nations. There can be no question about the fact that he possessed just the qualities of mind and heart which admirably fitted him to do the work for which he was divinely raised up and guided. He was the great destroyer of his day. Destruction and desolation continually marked his pathway. In short, he was the scourge of God on the wicked nations of Western Asia and Egypt during the time he reigned in Babylon.

(5) He was proud, boastful, and even arrogant. In this respect he was not different from many other military chieftains who have made their mark upon the world's history. When we take into consideration the times in which he lived, and the intense religiousness of his nature, there is little room for wonder that he displayed a very pronounced self-consciousness. Among the titles which he assumed were those of "Glorious Prince," "The Exalted," "The Exalted Chief," "The Possessor of Intelligence," "He who is firm and not to be overthrown," "The Valiant Son of Nabopolassar," "The Devout and Pious," "The Lord of Peace," "The Noble King" and "The Wise Mage." Indeed, he claimed kingship with the gods and that "Nebo gave into his hands the scepter of righteousness," that Sin was "the strengthener of his hands," that Shamas "perfected good in his body" and that Gula "beautified his person."

(6) He declared himself to be the eldest son of Merodach, whose power he had extended on account of that god's special favor to him.

In view of these facts it is not surprising that pride, boastfulness, and arrogancy should have characterized Nebuchadnezzar. Merodach was his chief deity and he constantly gave him the most prominent place among the gods of his pantheon. He did not worship him exclusively, but he evidently regarded him as preëminently the chief of all the gods; and it is probable that he regarded all the other gods as insignificant, partly because he was unwilling to allow many competitors for honors since he was anxious to absorb all honors to himself. He allowed only one god to occupy a prominent place, and even this would not have been permitted had not the position he ascribed to Merodach contributed to Nebuchadnezzar's pride. While he was no doubt honestly religious, no god would have been honored by him that did not in turn bring some honor to the king. At any rate, he claimed to be the son of Merodach, and it is evident that if this claim was once admitted, the elevation of Merodach would contribute something to the glory of the king himself. And it is not at all improbable that this is the main reason why he willingly granted to Merodach a superior position.

Such are some of the prominent traits of the great Chaldean king who was made the instrument of divine providence in chastening the covenanted people for their persistent sins. And a careful study of Nebuchadnezzar will help us to understand much that will follow in the history of the Exile. He died 562 B. C., and with his death the glory of Babylon began to depart. He was the one great figure of the Chaldean empire, and for forty-three years he ruled over its destinies in a manner which made its power felt wherever the name of Nebuchadnezzar was known. It was during his reign that the chastisement of Judah was so distinctly felt. Very many of the captives died even before the great king died, and others passed away soon after his death; so that comparatively a few only remained of those who



DAVID ROBERTS.

GREAT HALL AT KARNAK, THEBES.

were carried away in the earlier deportations when his son succeeded him, and probably very few, indeed, of the original captives were still living when Cyrus captured Babylon. There is positive evidence that Daniel lived until the reign of Cyrus, but it is not probable very many others lived to such an old age.

None of Nebuchadnezzar's successors were of much note. The first of these was his son Evil-Merodach, of whom very little is certainly known. Nearly all we know about him is found in the following passage of Scripture: "And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison; and he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon. And he changed his prison garments, and did eat bread before him continually all the days of his life. And for his allowance, there was a continual allowance given him of the king, every day a portion, all the days of his life."¹

From this passage it will be seen that among the first acts of the new king was his setting at liberty Jehoiachin and assigning to him a position in harmony with his new station. And if Josephus is to be trusted, Jehoiachin was actually brought into most intimate relations with Evil-Merodach and received large presents as a recompense for the sufferings he had undergone. But Josephus is not a very trustworthy guide in this matter. He tells us that Evil-Merodach reigned eighteen years, but it is now known that this statement is not correct. It is probable that Berosus gives us the true chronology of this period. He says that, after a wicked reign of two years, Evil-Merodach was murdered in a conspiracy. The chief conspirator is known to us from the Scriptures as Nergal-Sharezer. This man married the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, and was, therefore, the brother-in-law of Evil-Merodach. When the Babylonian army took Jerusalem, Nergal-Sharezer acted as Rab-mag, a title which implies "chief of the priests," or "Mighty Prince."

He reigned in all about four years, namely, from 560 B. C. to 556 B. C. His reign was almost colorless. He appears to have occupied his time chiefly in restoring two of the temples of Merodach in Babylon, building a palace for himself, and making some alterations in certain canals for the purposes of irrigation. It is not known when nor how he died.

His successor was Laborosoarchod, who was very young when he came to the throne, and whose reign lasted but a few months. Indeed, the only authority for his existence is Berosus, who, according to Josephus, speaks of him as follows: "By reason of the very ill temper and ill practices he exhibited to the world, a plot was laid against him by his friends, and he was tormented to death. After his death the conspirators got together, and by common consent put the crown upon the head of Nabonidus, a man of Babylon, and one who belonged to the insurrection."

Only about six years had elapsed since the death of Nebuchadnezzar when Nabonidus (the name by which he is best known) ascended the throne. During the interval nothing very special had marked the history of Babylon. It is probable that the commerce of the city continued to flourish, and it is equally probable that considerable was done during this time to carry out the improvements in buildings, gardens, and general decorations, etc., which had been begun on such a magnificent scale by Nebuchadnezzar. No doubt Babylon at this time had reached the height of architectural beauty, and Nabonidus, pursuing the peaceful arts, seems to have cared for nothing so much as to contribute to the beauty and splendor of the great city. There is no evidence that he engaged in any foreign wars. He seems to have contented himself with building temples, restoring and decorating the works of those who had reigned before him.

Nabonidus reigned from 555 to 538 B. C. Abydenus (as quoted by Eusebius) says that

¹ II. Kings xxv, 27-30 (Revised Version).

"Cyrus, after he had taken possession of Babylon, appointed him (that is, Nabonidus) governor of the country of Carmania. Darius, the king, removed him out of the land." Whether this statement is correct or not, it is certain that Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon before the Medo-Persian dynasty. In any case, we are justified in concluding that Nabonidus was, upon the whole, a weak ruler. Toward the close of his reign it is very probable that he practically retired from any active participation in public affairs, and virtually left the administration of the government in the hands of another.

And this brings us to consider a name which has been the puzzle of historians. That name is Belshazzar. Who was he? What was his position? and what was his relation to Nabonidus? Was he really a king or only a prince? Perhaps no character mentioned in the Bible has been the subject of more uncertainty. For a long time we were dependent exclusively on the Book of Daniel for all we knew of Belshazzar, and that book speaks of Nebuchadnezzar as Belshazzar's father, and also the former as "the king." It further represents him as reigning at the time that Babylon was captured, while it nowhere makes any mention of Nabonidus.

It has been difficult to reconcile these statements with all the known facts of the case; and the difficulty has led to some very inconclusive reasoning on the subject. Some writers, among whom may be mentioned Josephus, think that Belshazzar and Nabonidus are the same person, and this conclusion is reached because there is strong evidence that Nabonidus married Nebuchadnezzar's daughter. But it is not necessary to maintain this view in order to account for Belshazzar. Indeed, there are several important objections to it, though none of these need be regarded as insuperable, if there was not a better way out of the difficulty. In this, as in other things, recent discoveries come to our aid. What is called the chronicle of Nabonidus throws considerable light on Belshazzar. In 1854 Sir Henry Rawlinson first deciphered inscriptions on some cylinders found in the ruins of Mugheir (the ancient Ur of the Chaldees). Unfortunately a portion of the text is mutilated and cannot be deciphered at all. Other portions are fragmentary. However, enough is plain to show that the chronicle recounts in chronological order the events contained in the seventeen-years' reign of Nabonidus. The beginning of the inscription is entirely lost, and the end is completely mutilated, while there are certain breaks in the column which leave a blank interval between the third and sixth years of his reign, and make other years almost unintelligible. However, the only thing with which we are concerned at present is the help the cylinder gives us in determining who Belshazzar was. No doubt the inscription was written, or caused to be written, by Cyrus, and was intended to glorify himself rather than his predecessor. All we need to notice at present is what the tablet recounts as having happened in the *ninth* year of the reign of Nabonidus. We are told that Nabonidus himself remained in the town of Temâ while "his son (Bel-shar-usur) and the officers of state, as well as the troops, staid in the province of Akkad."

With respect to this record, three facts must be carefully noted. First, Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus; second, Belshazzar was at that time in Akkad; third, this was the *ninth* year of the reign of Nabonidus. Some have thought that, if Belshazzar had been associated with his father on the throne, he would not have been called simply the king's son. But we must remember that this chronicle records what took place in the *ninth year of the reign of Nabonidus*, while Belshazzar was not associated with his father until the *fifteenth year of the reign of Nabonidus*. No doubt if we had the complete inscriptions of the cylinder we should have a record of Belshazzar's death, or some word that would throw more light on his history. However, the tablet makes it absolutely certain that such a man lived, and that he commanded the Chaldean forces at Akkad, and that he was the king's son.

The conclusion is, therefore, quite probable that Belshazzar was associated with his father on the throne during the last three years of the reign of Nabonidus; and this is in accordance with the view expressed by Sir Henry Rawlinson in the following paragraph: "We can now

understand how Belshazzar, as joint king with his father, may have been governor of Babylon when the city was attacked by the combined forces of the Medes and Persians, and may have perished in the assault which followed; while Nabonidus, leading a force to the relief of the place, was defeated and obliged to take refuge in Barsippa, capitulating after a short resistance, and being subsequently assigned an honorable retirement in Carmania." This view of the matter is strengthened by the following considerations:

(1) It was a common practice with oriental monarchs, especially toward the latter part of their reign, to associate with themselves the sons who were to be their successors.

(2) The apparent indifference of Nabonidus to public affairs at the time Belshazzar is supposed to have reigned, strongly supports the conclusion that the latter was associated with his father, and was actually the chief director of public affairs, though he may not have been recognized as first in authority. We know that Nabonidus was at Temâ, and that place has been identified with Tuma, a quarter of Babylon, but as this identification has been disputed, it is sufficient to regard it as a city of Babylonia. From this place Nabonidus removed to E-tur-Kalama, the last place where he is spoken of as having resided. It was from this place he fled at the approach of the Persians, and, being pursued, was captured and carried in chains to Babylon. Meantime, Belshazzar was no doubt engaged in directing military affairs from Akkad in the first place, as this was the part of the kingdom which at that time was threatened by the Persian invasion, though, at the last, it is probable he was at Babylon, as the Book of Daniel says he reigned three years. This three-years' reign was no doubt in association with his father; but his father being absent from Babylon, Belshazzar would be the king to whom Daniel would most naturally refer, and especially as he was not writing history in general, but was only dealing with events immediately under his observation.

(3) But perhaps the most conclusive proof of all that Belshazzar was certainly associated with his father is the declaration of Belshazzar himself, as recorded in the Book of Daniel. He made proclamation that if anyone could read and interpret the marvelous writing which had appeared on the wall "he should be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and should be the *third ruler* in the kingdom." And we are further told that when Daniel had read and interpreted the words "they clothed Daniel in scarlet and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the *third ruler* in the kingdom." Now, what can this language mean, unless it clearly points to the fact that there were two other rulers of the kingdom already in existence, and that Daniel would occupy the third place. On the hypothesis that Nabonidus was the first ruler and Belshazzar the second, this language at once becomes intelligible. But on any other hypothesis the language is not capable of a rational explanation.

However, it has been suggested that the position of the third ruler corresponded to the first of the three presidents who were subsequently placed over the one hundred and twenty princes. But neither the language nor facts seem to support this conclusion. The three presidents were appointed by Darius, the successor of Belshazzar, whereas Daniel received his appointment from Belshazzar, and his appointment was actually proclaimed before Darius came to the throne.

It has been further urged that the Belshazzar of the Book of Daniel could not have been the son of Nabonidus because, in Daniel, v, 11, the queen speaks of Nebuchadnezzar as Belshazzar's father. But this is not a very serious difficulty. It has already been suggested that Nabonidus married the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, and consequently Belshazzar was the grandson of the great Chaldean king; and as there was no Hebrew or Chaldee word for either "grandfather" or "grandson," it was a common habit to speak of the former as "father" and the latter as "son." This use is illustrated in many parts of the Bible.

Now, when all these facts are taken into consideration the proof is practically conclusive that Belshazzar was not Nabonidus, but his son, and associated with Nabonidus on the throne

for the three years preceding the capture of Babylon by Cyrus. And this conclusion is not only reasonable in itself, but it furnishes another striking illustration as to how the Babylonian tablets support the testimony of Scripture. Rationalistic writers have been disposed to seriously question the historical trustworthiness of the Book of Daniel, and partly on account of what that book says of Belshazzar; they have persistently insisted that all contemporaneous history was silent as to any such person having lived, and they have referred to the statement that Herodotus does not even refer to Belshazzar, but mentioned Labynetus as the reigning king at that time. But Herodotus does not mention Nabonidus at all; and, consequently, the testimony of Herodotus proves nothing on either side of the question, though there are some reasons in Herodotus for identifying his Labynetus with the Belshazzar of Daniel and the tablets.

However, recent discoveries have at least made it possible to finally settle this much-contested question. The tablets made it certain that Belshazzar not only lived but was the son of Nabonidus, and was associated with his father, as has already been indicated. Nevertheless, even if the view now presented could not be reasonably sustained, there is still no insuperable difficulty in the case. Other explanations might be given which are much more plausible than any supposition which throws doubt upon the historical accuracy of the Book of Daniel. That book has been severely criticised by some very able modern scholars, but, like the three Hebrew worthies of whom the book speaks, it has stood the fiery trial without the slightest injury whatever. It is readily conceded that all the difficulties have not yet been entirely cleared away, but there can be no doubt about the fact that even those which remain are not half so great as the difficulties precipitated by the critics who have attacked the historical accuracy of the book. We may expect to find difficulties in nearly everything. The book of nature is full of them, but we do not reject the divine authorship of nature because these difficulties exist. We are rather disposed to believe that everything would be easily explained if we could master all the facts of the case. So we may believe as regards the Book of Daniel. Already many perplexing points have been cleared up, and it is not unreasonable to hope that new light will yet break upon all the dark places, and then the book will be all the stronger in its testimony because it has been weighed in the balances and not found wanting.

With the death of Belshazzar and the capture of Babylon the great Chaldean empire came to an end, and we must henceforth study the history of the captives under the empire which succeeded, namely, the Medo-Persian and Persian. But before finally dismissing the Chaldean empire it is important to consider the educational and social influences to which the exiles were exposed, and also the character and fortunes of some of their most distinguished leaders. The latter will be reserved for a separate treatment. But it is proper at once to take a brief survey of the education, laws and customs of the people with whom the exiles were in contact during the period of the Captivity.

However, it is well at this point to guard against attaching too much importance to the influence of environment upon the captives. No doubt this influence was very considerable, but there is no evidence at all that it amounted to anything like what has been claimed for it by many recent writers. It has already been noted that the Jews occupied separate communities, and were largely under leaders of their own blood. And it must never be forgotten that the exclusive tendencies of the Jews would naturally lead them to avoid as much as possible the adoption of heathen habits and customs. That some of them did become idolaters is unquestionable, but this frequently happened when they were in their native land. They were always much more ready to run after strange gods than to adopt strange customs.

It must also be remembered that they were far from being an ignorant people when they entered Babylonia. This fact has not been sufficiently emphasized in recent discussions. They evidently took with them an inherited literary culture of no mean character. The discoveries at Tel el-Amarna make it evident that a high state of civilization prevailed in Palestine in the

time of Joshua, and as the Israelites had been in contact with all the culture of Egypt during their sojourn in that country, it is probable that they brought with them into Canaan a literature far from contemptible. Indeed, it is quite as probable that they received in Egypt as much help from the Egyptians as they did in Babylonia from the Chaldeans. In both cases they were in bondage, and it is by no means certain that their opportunities for culture in Babylonia were much better than they were in Egypt. The poorer classes were oppressed in both countries, and there is no trustworthy evidence that the treatment they received in Egypt was much worse than that received in Babylonia. But, even allowing for a supposed difference in this respect in favor of the Babylonian Captivity, it is still reasonable to conclude that the educational facilities, to the poorer classes at least, were not very great in either country.

One thing, however, is well known. From the sojourn in Egypt, if not even earlier, the literary activity of Israel had been very considerable. They certainly possessed sacred writings, which they regarded with great reverence. It is also certain that schools had been formed, in which, under the direction of a master, students were taught reading, writing, composition, music, and especially the law, which was everywhere regarded as the chief guide in morals and religion. In the same schools were taught sacred poetry, exegesis, criticism, etc.; and when the prophetic period was reached, religious instruction was carried to a still higher degree. It is, therefore, highly probable that the Babylonians received more educational help from the Jews than the latter received from the former. Indeed, there is strong circumstantial evidence that the Babylonian civilization was considerably affected by the Jewish captivity.

At the same time we must not suppose that the Jews were not influenced at all by their environment during the Exile. Babylon was at that time the center of considerable literary activity, though the inhabitants were not originally a literary people. We must remember that they were not the original inhabitants of the country. Prior to the rise of the great Semitic empire the kingdoms of Sumer and Akkad had flourished and passed away. It is not certainly known who the Sumerians were, but it is known that before the Semites occupied the Euphrates valley the former had built up a culture, and had made some progress in the arts and sciences, arithmetic and astronomy, sculpture and architecture. They had also a code of laws and a system of writing. The Semitic Babylonians were illiterate and borrowed nearly all the learning they afterward possessed from the Sumerians and the surrounding nations. This fact has considerable bearing on the suggestion already made that the Babylonians used their opportunities to learn as much as possible from the Jewish captives. And this notion is still further strengthened by the fact that the first captives carried away (among whom was Daniel) were trained by Nebuchadnezzar in Babylonian culture with a view to making them useful in carrying out his own plans. We cannot doubt that the influence of these educated young men must have been very great in disseminating Jewish ideas among the Babylonians with whom they came in contact. On the other hand, it cannot be doubted that these young men, educated in Babylonian schools, would also impress their Babylonian culture upon their fellow-captives. Consequently, it is reasonable to suppose that their influence would operate in both directions; and this much ought to be freely admitted in order to reach any just conception of all the facts of the case.

Possibly the chief influence exerted upon the Jews was from a religious point of view. The Mosaic law contained no well-defined doctrines of the future life. Its rewards and punishments did not extend beyond the present life; and while other sacred Jewish books did undoubtedly teach the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, the Jews were so exclusively governed by the law during the reign of the kings that all subsidiary teaching was with them of secondary importance. Hence, the national character, as well as all theological conceptions, depended mainly upon the direction of the Mosaic law. However, as this law was not practically enforced during the Captivity, there was opportunity for the Jewish people to study

the Psalms and the Prophets; and as they were constantly in contact with Babylonian ideas of a future life, it is easy to see how they would interpret the Psalms and Prophets from a new point of view. In any case it is evident that the period of the Captivity had considerable influence upon Jewish notions with respect to the future life.

CHAPTER V.

DREAMS AND VISIONS.

IT is a curious fact that in every dispensation dreams and visions have a prominent place. The opening sentences of the Epistle to the Hebrews are very suggestive. The first word is God, and this is exactly the word which would command attention and need no discussion with those to whom the epistle was written. It is then declared that in former dispensations communications had been made to the fathers in the Prophets by "divers portions and in divers manners"; and whoever reads carefully Old Testament history will not fail to appreciate this statement of the apostle. Among these "divers manners" which God used in making his will known, dreams and visions undoubtedly take the first rank. And this was so common as well as so important a method, that in Proverbs it is declared that "where there is no vision, the people perish," or cast off restraint.

Evidently the people depended largely upon dreams and visions for direction in the way they should go. And this was so much the case that finally Jeremiah had to warn the Jews against a danger of being misled by a method of communication which was easily perverted from a legitimate use. The prophet's language is so expressive and suggestive that it may be well to quote the following verses: "I have heard what the prophets have said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies; even the prophets of the deceit of their own heart? which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbor, as their fathers forgot my name for Baal. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the straw to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbor. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy lying dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their vain boasting: yet I sent them not, nor commanded them; neither shall they profit this people at all, saith the Lord."¹

But this protest against false prophets and false dreams must not be understood as indicating that dreams are in themselves wrong, or that they may not be useful mediums through which to convey important truth. Even under the Christian dispensation the value of dreams and visions is recognized by divine authority. The Apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, quoted from the Prophet Joel to the effect that God would, in the last days, pour out of his spirit upon all flesh, and that our sons and daughters should prophesy, our young men see visions, and our old men dream dreams.² And as a matter of fact this is just what is happening every day. It is probably true that there are no prophets now like those in the days of the Jewish dispensation; nor can it be said that dreams and visions take on the same form they did in olden times; but it is no doubt still true that our young men see visions and our old men

¹ Jeremiah xxiii, 25-32 (Revised Version).

² Acts ii, 17.

dream dreams; and it is equally true that where no vision is, the people cast off restraint. All original thinkers are dreamers or seers. True poets are specially gifted in this way. They nearly always live in advance of their time. They are the voices crying in the wilderness, saying, Prepare ye the way of truth, make its paths straight. In short, they are forerunners in the lead of human progress, whose words are necessary to keep the people from casting off restraint, or from perishing for want of fresh enterprises and new inspirations to activity.

But there is the same danger to be guarded against now as there was in the days of Jeremiah. We must be careful to discriminate between the straw and the wheat. A dream is nothing if it is not in harmony with the Word of God. The latter is the only infallible rule of faith and duty, and consequently the value of all dreams and visions must be determined by an appeal to the Holy Spirit's testimony. We must ever remember that there is no promise that in these days we shall have any such revelations as either the prophets of old or the apostles received. Paul tells the Ephesians of a mystery which he had received by revelation, and which he wrote "afore in a few words," so that when the Ephesians read what he had written they could understand his knowledge of the mystery of Christ. His language is very suggestive. He received the knowledge of the mystery by direct revelation, but the Ephesians had the mystery made known to them by Paul, who communicated his knowledge to them in an epistle. They did not receive a direct revelation, but had to depend upon the apostle's testimony for all they knew about the matter. We now have a written report of the communications of God to the world through the prophets, Christ and his apostles, and as these have spoken for every respective dispensation we cannot hope for any new revelations in regard to the facts and principles by which we should be guided until another dispensation dawns upon the world, should any such be necessary to the fulfilling of the divine purpose. At the same time, dreams and visions, in the sense already indicated, are valuable even during the dispensation in which we live.

We have already seen that prophecy occupied a most important place in the history of the Jews from King Hezekiah to the close of the Old Testament Canon, and that during the Exile the captives were mainly confined to the help which the prophets gave them in all that related to their spiritual culture. Among the prophets of that period no one filled a more important sphere than Daniel the Beloved. He was, perhaps, not so closely related to the Jewish people as was Ezekiel; but, owing to the favor which he received in court circles, his influence in guiding the government with respect to the Jews must have been very potential. It should never be forgotten that we must constantly study the Exile in association with the Chaldean and Persian governments, and it cannot be doubted that Daniel rose to very high favor with Nebuchadnezzar, Darius the Mede, and Cyrus; so that he was influential under at least three kings, whatever his position may have been between the death of Nebuchadnezzar and the death of Belshazzar. It is freely admitted that we are mainly indebted to the Book of Daniel for nearly all we certainly know about Daniel himself, and the historical authority of this book has been seriously questioned by some modern critics. While it is readily conceded that this is not the place to discuss either the historical truthfulness or genuineness of the book in question, it is nevertheless believed, as so much use must be made of this book in subsequent discussions regarding the Exile, that any neglect to relieve the reader's mind from reasonable doubts concerning the points in controversy would be a culpable oversight. Consequently, it is deemed well to look very briefly at some of the objections which have been made to the authority and genuineness of the book. But, instead of examining these objections *seriatim*, it will be sufficient to state a few characteristics of the book, as this course will enable the reader to judge of the place it should occupy in the Old Testament Canon.

(1) In opening the book, the first thing that strikes the reader is the difference of style between the first and last six chapters. The former are written in the third person, the latter in

the first person. The first six chapters may have been written by anyone, the last six claim to have been written by Daniel himself. And as the Scriptures nowhere say that the book as a whole was written by Daniel, nor that it was issued in Daniel's lifetime, it is not at all necessary to our present purpose to contend for anything more than that its historical statements are trustworthy and that its prophecies are genuine. It really does not matter much whether the writer of the first part lived in Daniel's time, or, as some suppose, more than three hundred years later. Some of our best histories of events belonging to a period of many hundred years ago are written by authors of the present day. There is nothing, therefore, in the historical part of the Book of Daniel that makes it necessary that this part should have been written by Daniel himself.

(2) The same cannot be said of the latter part of the book. This is devoted mainly to dreams and visions, and we are compelled to believe that Daniel is the author of the last six chapters, though we need not contend that even this part was published at the time he wrote it. And that he did write this part himself is either true or else all that has been said is wholly untrustworthy. He speaks in the first person and professes to tell what he saw and heard; and it is inconceivable that he could have spoken as he has done if the whole story is a cunningly devised fable. However, there is no sufficient evidence that he did not write the whole book or that it was not published about the time of the Return or soon afterward.

(3) The language and idioms of the book are such as make it almost necessary that it should have been written during the Exile or at an early subsequent period. The book is composed partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic. The first part, extending from chapter ii, 4, to chapter vii, is in the latter language, while the remaining portion of the book is written in the former language. Daniel was undoubtedly well acquainted with both of these languages, and it is strongly suggested by the very fact of the language in which the historical part is found that it was written in Babylonia; and if it was written there, the most reasonable hypothesis seems to be that it was written by Daniel himself.

(4) The book is frequently referred to in other parts of the Bible, and these references make it evident that the prophets, Christ and his apostles regarded the book as historically trustworthy and genuine, and Daniel himself just such a person as the book represents him to have been. The Prophet Ezekiel, who was with the exiles, refers to Daniel thrice,¹ and these references cannot mean any other person than the one who is mentioned in the Book of Daniel. The New Testament references are equally conclusive.

(5) The Septuagint version includes the Book of Daniel, and this proves that it was regarded as canonical when that version was made; and it is probable that the Septuagint version dates as far back as Ptolemy Philadelphus (285 B. C.²). It is evident, therefore, that the notion that the Book of Daniel was written somewhere between 170 B. C. and 164 B. C. cannot be maintained. Perhaps the book was tampered with during the Maccabean age, and we know that Apocryphal additions were made in Greek, but no one now supposes that these have any connection with the original book.

(6) Josephus gives the substance of some parts of the Book of Daniel, and he states that Daniel was the author of it, and that it was written many years before the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Romans concerning whom he prophesied. Undoubtedly the "many years" referred to by Josephus include the period from 534 B. C. to 167 B. C.

(7) The Persian words contained in the Book of Daniel seem to suit the period of the Exile and not the Maccabean period. But it has been said that the Greek words in turn suit the Maccabean period better. However, these Greek terms are few in number and relate to musical instruments. The introduction of these terms is easily explained. It has already been

¹ Ezekiel xiv, 14, 20; xxviii, 3.

² See Book X.

shown that the Babylonians were not originally a musical people. They received their ideas of music mainly from other nations. At the time of the Exile, Greek culture had already begun to make itself felt in Babylonia, and it is probable that these musical terms were introduced about that time. There is nothing more common than to introduce foreign terms as the names of instruments which are adopted by any people. The English-speaking nations have introduced the foreign names of musical instruments, such as piano, guitar, violin, violoncello, trombone, banjo, etc. Traces of Greek influence have been found as existing in Egypt at a period much earlier than the Exile. Mr. Flinders Petrie says that "the Greek names of musical instruments may have been heard in the courts of Solomon's temple."

The foregoing considerations are sufficient to settle the question of the trustworthiness and genuineness of the Book of Daniel. Many other evidences might be added, but the points presented make it impossible to suppose that the book was written in the time of the Maccabees. Indeed, there is no hypothesis which fits all the facts so well as the one which ascribes the authorship of the Book of Daniel to Daniel himself, and that it was completed about the third year of the reign of Cyrus, though some parts of it may have been written even before that time.

It has been a matter of some interest as to why Nebuchadnezzar should have been made the medium through which to reveal future events. It has seemed to some inconsistent with the character of God that a man like Nebuchadnezzar should have been used for such a purpose. But a careful consideration of the facts of the case will make it evident that the selection of the Chaldean king for the purpose indicated, clearly demonstrates a wisdom which is not human; and at the same time there is nothing in this selection contrary to the "divers manners" of divine revelation. However, it may be well to mention a few facts in connection with this matter in order to show that Nebuchadnezzar was exactly the proper medium for the purpose which was in view.

(1) The revelation was to be concerning kingdoms. It was fitting, therefore, that the dreams should have an origin which would command attention and reverence.

(2) The Chaldean kingdom was immediately concerned, and Nebuchadnezzar was seriously affected in the fulfillment of the dreams. It was important, therefore, that he himself should be well assured of the reality of the visions. This result could not have been secured so well in any other way as by the plan adopted.

(3) It offered an opportunity to secure special favor for Daniel and other Hebrew worthies, and, in a less important sense, special favors for all the captives. It must never be forgotten that though the Jews were in exile they were still regarded with tender concern by the God of their fathers.

(4) The immediate purpose of the dreams was the influence they should have upon Nebuchadnezzar, by teaching him that there was one greater than he, and therefore greater than all the kings of the earth. The Chaldean king was, by the visions, strongly exhorted to cultivate righteousness, to love mercy, and to avoid injustice, tyranny, and cruelty, which were some of his special characteristics.

(5) There is a certain dignity about these visions which specially belongs to their association with the great Chaldean king. They were intended to furnish a striking object lesson for succeeding generations, and it was, therefore, highly appropriate that they should emanate from the most distinguished autocrat of his times.

(6) Undoubtedly the ultimate and even main purpose of the dreams was to glorify the God of heaven over the gods which Nebuchadnezzar worshiped. It was intended to be a practical demonstration that the God of all the earth, the God which Daniel worshiped, was superior to all the gods of Babylonia. The aim was to secure a royal recognition of this fact; and in this respect there was no disappointment.

The dream of the image is the first one which comes under our notice. All the facts about this are interesting, and these are related in the second chapter of the Book of Daniel in a style which is as vivid in color as it is remarkable for minuteness of detail. We may reasonably suppose that Nebuchadnezzar had been meditating upon his kingdom. His reign had begun with many evidences of great prosperity. No doubt he was very much elated at what, in modern style, was the outlook. Perhaps his pride, which was already great, was largely increased by his reflections. During his meditations he seems to have fallen into a sleep, and we are told that he "dreamed dreams, and his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him." Then he called the magicians, enchanters, soothsayers, and Chaldeans, in order that they might tell his dreams and give their interpretation. But the test which the king made was at once too severe for the wise men of Babylon. He not only wanted the interpretation of his dream, but he demanded that the wise men should tell what the dream was. This, of course, they could not do, and consequently the king ordered that they should all be destroyed.

It is evident that Nebuchadnezzar intended to make his dream of the image a test case with respect to the claims of the wise men. It is probable that he had very little faith in their pretensions, and as he could not endure any competition with his own wisdom which could not be thoroughly sustained by indubitable proof, it was quite in harmony with the character of the man that any failure on the part of the wise men to meet his requirements should be severely punished. Besides this, it is not at all improbable that the king had strong suspicions that these wise men were frauds and that he had now a good opportunity to get rid of them. It is possible, also, that by this time he was somewhat in doubt as to the wisdom of the gods which the people worshiped. He had already heard of the true God. His contact with the Jewish people, and probably with some of their literature, especially the writings of the preëxilic prophets, may have shaken his faith, to some extent at least, in the polytheism of the Babylonians. It has already been mentioned that Merodach was his chief deity, and it is not improbable that he ascribed to Merodach some of the characteristics which the Jews ascribed to the God of their fathers, and it is not at all impossible that the king borrowed his notions from the Jews. But no matter how this may have been, it is certainly a very striking fact that Nebuchadnezzar required the wise men to tell what his dream was that he might be assured of their ability to interpret it.

Now had come Daniel's opportunity. He had already attracted some attention on account of his refusal to accept the "daily portion of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank," but he seems to have been kept closely at his studies, which were intended to prepare him for the king's service; and consequently he had received no particular public recognition up to the time of the king's dream. But when Daniel heard of all that had happened, and what was about to befall the wise men, from Arioch, the king's executioner, he "went in, and desired of the king that he would appoint him a time and he would show the king the interpretation."

Daniel's conduct at this time is worthy of special notice. He immediately made known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, what had transpired, and they then sought the "mercies of the God of heaven concerning the secret," so that Daniel and his companions should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon; and when the secret was revealed to Daniel in a vision at night he blessed the God of heaven and magnified his name for his wisdom, power, and goodness. And, when he comes into the presence of the king, Daniel's dependence upon God is still prominently exhibited in all that he says and does. He does not claim any power to reveal the secret himself. He says "the secret which the king hath demanded can neither wise men, enchanters, magicians, nor soothsayers show unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and he hath made known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days."

The king's dream had respect to an image which he saw, mighty in size, a kind of colossus, bright in appearance and terrible in aspect. It consisted of four well-defined parts. (1) The head was golden. (2) The breast and arms were silver — of a twofold character. (3) The belly and thighs were brass, also of a twofold character. (4) The legs and feet were iron and clay; not only of a twofold character, but also much divided. The king also saw a stone cut out without hands; this smote the image and destroyed it, and finally this little stone, which was cut out of the mountain, filled the whole earth with its dimensions.

This dream should be interpreted in connection with a subsequent dream which Daniel had. Indeed, Daniel's visions are all more or less amplifications of the first dream of the Chaldean king; consequently, if we can interpret the dream of the image correctly, there needs be little trouble about the visions which follow in the Book of Daniel. Really this vision of the image may be regarded as the key to all subsequent prophecy, whether in the Book of Daniel or the Book of Revelation. It is most important, therefore, that we should have a clear understanding of this vision of the image.

Of course, it is well known that there have been several interpretations given of it. But there is only one which seems to answer the main facts of the case, and this one is now very generally adopted by all expositors whose views are not fanciful. Without going into a detailed account of other interpretations it will be sufficient to say that, while in some particulars they seem to answer the conditions of the vision, they all lack unity when the facts are taken together. Consequently, it is believed that the only interpretation which will stand a rational test is the one which makes the image represent the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires.

The following facts should be noted with respect to the image: (1) There is a decrease in the value of the metal from the head to the feet. (2) There are certain doubles which have significance in the subsequent facts of history. (3) The iron of the last kingdom finally degenerated into clay.

With these facts before us it is easy to see what the import of the dream was. There is no question about what the head represented, as Daniel tells us this much in plain language. Taking the dreams and visions together, the golden head of the colossus, or the lion with the eagle's wings, undoubtedly represents the Babylonian empire. It is also evident that the silver breast and arms of the image, or the bear with the three ribs, must be identified with the Medo-Persian kingdom. The brazen belly and thighs, or the panther, may be identified with the Macedonian empire under Alexander the Great and his successors, the thighs representing the kingdoms of the Ptolemies and Seleucidæ. The two legs of the image, partly iron and partly clay, corresponding to the fourth beast in Daniel's vision, seem fitly to represent the Roman empire, which, after a certain period, should be destroyed and then succeeded by the kingdom of the Messiah, symbolized in Nebuchadnezzar's dream by the rolling stone, but described more fully in Daniel's vision as "the kingdom of the Saints of the Most High."

The part of these visions with which we are most concerned is that which refers to the Messiah. No doubt the Jews were greatly comforted by Daniel's interpretation. This interpretation made it evident that they would soon be under a new kingdom, and that, under this new kingdom, they would be permitted to return to their native land. But perhaps the most cheering hope which the interpretation inspired was the fact that ultimately all the kingdoms or empires with which their subsequent history would be associated must end in ruin, while a kingdom would succeed them over which a king of the tribe of Judah would reign, and whose kingdom would be everlasting.

Looked at from the point of view of the exile, it is easy to see how all the visions in the Book of Daniel must have had an encouraging effect upon the captives. No doubt they were familiar with these things, for they certainly did not take place in a corner. We must remember

that Nebuchadnezzar honored Daniel for the interpretation of his dream. Indeed, he worshiped him, thinking that the flesh-dwelling gods were in him; he also "made Daniel a great man, and gave him many gifts and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon," while, at Daniel's request, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon. Of course, all this could not have been done without the import of the dream becoming widely known. In the Jewish meeting places, or synagogues, where they came together for worship and the study of the Scriptures, it is highly probable that Daniel frequently met with them and expounded to them the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel, with respect to their future destiny, while at the same time he emphasized the practical bearing of his own visions on the subsequent history of the exiles.

However, as already intimated, the most encouraging part of the visions relates not only to the Jews but also to the Gentiles. The Messianic kingdom is the only one which meets all the conditions of the whole human race. The Gospel is intended for every creature, and, consequently, Christ's kingdom is ecumenical — it embraces all the nations of the earth. It may not be possible to make all the facts of history exactly fit in every particular the dreams and visions of the Book of Daniel. It would be unreasonable to expect any such correspondence in matters of detail. Analogy is an equality of ratios. There may be a wide dissimilarity as regards material, environment, and many other things; but if there is a correspondence with respect to the particular point to be illustrated, then the analogy may be easily traced at that point, though it may not be pressed any further. By not observing this important rule in Biblical interpretation much confusion has been produced. With this rule before us it is impossible not to see the coming glories of the Messianic kingdom and the final triumph of Judah in the reign of him who is the lion of that tribe.

At the same time it is well to notice the remarkable fulfillment of Daniel's predictions in the history of the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Macedonian, and Roman empires. It is impossible to trace the rise, progress, and final destruction of these empires without realizing that Daniel must have had foreknowledge of what was to take place. In the image which Nebuchadnezzar saw, as well as in Daniel's vision of the four beasts, there is not only an unmistakable reference to the four empires mentioned, but there are clear intimations as to the relations these sustained to one another as well as the divisions which took place in some of them. In fact, there are so many essential features clearly portrayed that we are compelled to believe that Daniel was under the influence of the divine factor in history (which is the necessary complement to the human), when he traced the outlines of the coming ages as he saw them from the heights of prophetic vision during his exile in Babylon.

CHAPTER VI.

FAITH VERSUS IDOLATRY.

PERHAPS the most potent factor in human history has been the courage to say "No." The constant exercise of this courage would have saved the race from untold troubles. When the serpent, with beguiling enchantments, pleaded with Eve to break the law of God, if she had answered him with an emphatic *no*, how different would have been the condition of mankind to-day! But we have learned something since that sad experience in the Garden of Eden; and now we can trace, through the history of the past, the whole line of human progress by almost innumerable protests which have been made against evil, wrong, and falsehood. In some respects the attitude of men has been changed toward the divine government. The experiment in Eden practically revolutionized the law of progress. That experiment was with a positive command of God, and implicit obedience to this made everything safe. All that was necessary to be done was unhesitatingly to obey the divine commandment. Now, however, we are first of all concerned with the other side of things; we must refuse to obey the commandment of the evil one. This is the lesson which the tragedy in Eden has unmistakably taught the race.

Many illustrations could be given of the fact which has been stated. Indeed, the history of the past is full of striking incidents showing the value of earnest protest. A well-known example is furnished in the Protestant Reformation under Luther and his associates. Much of the power of this Reformation was owing to the refusal of the reformers to do that which they regarded as wrong. It is readily granted that they maintained some important positive principles; but, after allowing fully for the influence of these, it is still highly probable that the main impetus which the movement received had its origin in the earnest protests which the reformers made against the evils of their day. In any case it cannot be doubted that the very name which the movement received — namely, Protestant — suggests that which was mainly fundamental in all the success that was achieved.

In view of the foregoing statements it is not remarkable that there were at least a few protestants in Babylon at the time of the Exile. The names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego ought to be written upon the same scroll with those of Luther, Melancthon, and Zwingli. Indeed, the protestants of Babylon were more severely tried than those of the Lutheran Reformation. And yet the faith of these heroic exiles stood the test in a manner which has commanded the admiration of all succeeding generations. Their case not only illustrates the imperious despotism under which they were placed, but it also strongly emphasizes the power of God to deliver his people from the severest trials when they implicitly put their faith in him. Of course, we must never forget that those were days of temporal deliverances. At that time the promises of rewards and punishments were confined mainly, if not exclusively, to the present life. Hence, miraculous interpositions in the temporal affairs of men were much more common then than now. Perhaps we ought not to look for such visible manifestations of divine power at all in the present day, though it is by no means certain that we are not subjected to trials even greater than those who lived under the Jewish dispensation. Our trials are of a different kind, and our deliverances are also different; but all the same it is still true that the blessed man is the one who endures trials, for when he is tested he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

The incident to which reference is about to be made took place probably not long after the destruction of Jerusalem. There is no time mentioned, but there are some facts which seem to point to the period indicated. It is safe in any case to locate the time, when the golden image



DAVID ROBERTS.

TEMPLE OF ABU-SIMBEL.

was set up, somewhere between the nineteenth and thirty-fifth years of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. It is known that during this period he was mainly concerned with beautifying Babylon and strengthening his power at home and abroad; or, to use his own words he was "at rest in his house and flourishing in his palace." In short, it was a period of comparative quiet throughout his dominions, and it may have been about the thirty-fifth year of his reign when the incident on the plain of Dura took place.

It has already been stated that Merodach was Nebuchadnezzar's favorite deity, but Merodach was the local deity of Babylon, and, as a younger god, had slowly taken the place once held by the elder god Bel or Belus. The Chaldean king was a politician, and in order partially to meet the prejudices of those who still held to the worship of Bel in preference to that of Merodach, the king compromised the matter by calling his favorite Bel-Merodach. But even this shrewd diplomacy did not meet the whole case. The people of Babylonia were polytheists, and many of them were evidently slow to accept of Merodach, the local deity of Babylon, even with his prefix Bel, as the god who should be worshiped above all gods. No doubt Nebuchadnezzar's pride was involved in the matter. He could not bear with patience any tendency which contested his own opinions. He may have thought, also, as Nabonidus did afterward, that the excessive polytheism of Babylonia was a constant danger to the empire; and, in such a case, his object was, no doubt, by the erection of the golden image, to secure for Bel-Merodach the recognition of all his subjects. The king himself was a polytheist, in theory at least, though probably in practice he was really a monotheist. But he was more than either of these — a shrewd politician. He undoubtedly understood the influence of the spectacular; and it is almost certain that his aim was, in setting up the golden image of Bel-Merodach, to make the occasion so impressive as to compel a very general, if not universal, recognition of his favorite god.

If this was his object it must be confessed that the means which he employed, looked at from a human point of view only, were well calculated to bring success to his plans. The image itself was remarkable. It may not have been of solid gold; though, in view of the wealth at the disposal of Nebuchadnezzar, even an image constructed of solid gold need not be regarded as improbable. Still, as both Isaiah and Jeremiah have given us descriptions as to how idols were made, we may reasonably conclude that this one was constructed in the usual way; and if such was the case, it was first made from either palm wood or cedar wood and then overlaid with thin plates of gold. When placed upon the pedestal it would be fastened with silver chains, so as to keep it unshaken in its elevated position.

The image under consideration, including the pedestal, was no less than sixty cubits (or about one hundred feet) high. The breadth of the pedestal was six cubits. The image at the top, however, was only a head or bust; but as this was undoubtedly of considerable size and overlaid with gold, it would, from its elevated pedestal in the plains of Dura, reflect to the inhabitants of Babylon the rays of the rising sun at the very hour when prayers were offered. And, in view of this fact, it is easy to see that the king planned wisely in regard to spectacular effect. The inauguration ceremonies were also all designed with a view to impressing the people. There is nothing like a large assembly to inspire enthusiasm. This important factor had not been overlooked. On the day of the dedication the plain was filled with the officers of state and with representatives from all parts of the empire. A band of music was also present, composed of trumpets, flutes, harps, bagpipes, psalteries, drums, and cymbals; and though the music discoursed was doubtless of a very crude kind, it nevertheless added much to the impressiveness of the occasion. It is worthy of remark that the army was also well represented. It is probable that this feature was made indispensable on account of the imperious edict which was proclaimed by the king through his herald. This proclamation was as follows: "Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that at what time

ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar, the king hath set up; and whoso falleth not down and worshipeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."¹

Evidently the time for making this proclamation was wisely selected. Nothing was said about what would be required of the people until they were in the presence of the image. Now, for the first time, they were told what everyone must do or suffer the consequences of a horrible death. But even this despotic edict was made as easy as possible by that which was to accompany its observance. Not only was the sound of the music to be a signal for the people to fall down and worship the image, but it was intended also to be an inspiration to impel them to do what the king wished. With people whose religious convictions were rather easy-going, an occasion like this was all that was necessary to secure obedience to an edict, the full import of which they had no time to consider, and especially as they knew that protest would be in vain while they were in the presence of an army which was there probably for the very purpose of enforcing the king's decree. Consequently, notwithstanding many present did not take kindly to the worship of Bel-Merodach, they did not hesitate to bow down and worship the image at the time specified in the king's proclamation.

There were three, however, who did not obey the king's decree, and as these occupied prominent official position in the province of Babylon, their conduct was soon reported to Nebuchadnezzar. These three men were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their action was apparently a fine opportunity for their enemies; and that they had enemies is almost certain because of the readiness with which their refusal to obey the king's command was reported to him, and also for the reason that men of pure characters, when in official position, are almost sure to make enemies of those who envy them, or who cannot endure their righteous administration of public affairs.

But whatever may have been the cause, the three protestants were soon summoned before the king, who was very angry on account of their refusal to bow down and worship the golden image he had set up, though even in his anger he was inclined to the notion that they had not disobeyed his order purposely, and he was therefore willing to give them another chance. Their answer to his demand is worthy to be printed in golden letters. They said, "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."² This answer expresses, in the first place, their faith that the God whom they served was able to deliver them from the fiery furnace, and that he would rescue them out of the king's hand. In the second place, it expressed also their utter unwillingness to obey the king's decree whether they should be delivered or not. Their answer was an emphatic *no* to his demand, and this filled the king with fury, so that his visage changed and he commanded that the furnace should be heated seven times more than it was wont to be, and that certain mighty men who were in his army should bind the Hebrew worthies and cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

The result was in every way remarkable, though in no way different from what the sublime faith of the Hebrews expected. They implicitly trusted in their God, and he did not forsake them. Their deliverance was complete, and it was all the more impressive because of the pains which had been taken to make the punishment certain and swift. The effect upon the king was, at least momentarily, overwhelming. He could scarcely believe his own eyes when he saw the three condemned men walking unharmed in the flames while they seemed to be supported by a fourth whose aspect was like a son of the gods. It is not surprising, therefore, when the victory of faith had been fully achieved, that Nebuchadnezzar should make a

¹ Daniel iii, 4-7 (Revised Version).

² Daniel iii, 17-19 (Revised Version).

decree that every people, nation, and language which might speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego should be cut in pieces and their houses made a dung-hill; "because there is no other god that is able to deliver after this sort." Nor are we surprised that the king should have promoted the noble protestants who had been so signally delivered by the God whom they worshiped. However, there are a few things that are forcibly suggested by this deliverance, and it may not be amiss to notice these briefly before the incident is dismissed.

(1) The king does not accept the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as the only God worthy of worship. He recognizes him as able to deliver in a manner which no other god could do, but he does not recognize him as even the chief of deities.

(2) The king's conversion was, therefore, only half accomplished, and even what he did confess was practically extorted from him, and was probably a sort of perfunctory recognition which did not promise to be either permanent or of much benefit to the king himself.

(3) The proclamation of the king no doubt did much good in making the God of the Hebrews known, as well as in bringing the captives into the favorable consideration of the Babylonians.

(4) Refusal to obey the powers that be is sometimes the highest duty. There is nothing in Paul's teaching contrary to this affirmation. Paul simply guards against rebellion. When there is a conflict between civil authority and conscience, the only thing we can do is to say *no* to the demand of human government and either suffer or else trust to the deliverance of God.

(5) Protest against evil has usually resulted to the ultimate advantage of the cause of the protestants. The blood of the martyrs has always been the seed of the Church. Persecution never fails to injure its own cause. It may have temporary success, but the day of reckoning is sure to come. All bigotry must ultimately come to grief. "Now abideth faith, hope, love; and the greatest of these is love."

(6) The deliverance of these Hebrews was immediate, and doubtless for the reason that it was necessary for the power of God to be manifested in a very striking way before Nebuchadnezzar and the people. It does not always follow, however, that we should expect temporal deliverance from persecutions. It may be better for us to *endure* the trial so that we may be purified and thereby be made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

(7) All persecutions as well as all unrighteousness will ultimately end in the glory of God. This is one of the most marvelous facts connected with an overruling providence, and yet it is a fact easily demonstrable from the Scriptures as well as from the history of the race. Faith has never been opposed to idolatry when the former did not finally triumph, and this triumph has always brought honor both to God and men.

The setting up of Nebuchadnezzar's golden image strikingly illustrates the proverb that "pride goes before a fall." It has already been stated that the period under consideration was characterized by the reign of peace throughout the king's dominions. It is well known that he devoted several years and all the vast resources at his command in making Babylon the wonder of the world; and some idea may be gathered of the magnificent city when we take into consideration a few facts with respect to it. The wall was at least sixty miles in circumference. The city itself was laid out in six hundred and twenty-five squares, formed by the intersection of twenty-five streets at right angles, and the whole area included a space nearly three times as large as that covered by London. The walls were at least seventy-five feet high and thirty-two broad. The river Euphrates divided the city into two parts, namely eastern and western, and these parts were connected by a bridge which was remarkable for its construction. This bridge was built by Nebuchadnezzar, as was also the western part of the city. Besides these, he built several lines of fortification round the entire city, and erected palaces which in splendor eclipsed every other thing of the kind in his day. The celebrated "hanging gardens," which were

erected mainly to please his wife, were the wonder of the ancient world. So marvelous were the descriptions of ancient historians with respect to the splendor and magnificence of Babylon that some have been disposed to doubt their historical accuracy. Now, however, the whole matter has been set at rest. The testimony of the inscriptions fully corroborates Berosus, while an examination of the ruins of Babylon at the present day shows that fully nine-tenths of the bricks found among these ruins are stamped with Nebuchadnezzar's name; and according to Sir Henry Rawlinson the same is true of "the bricks, *in situ*, belonging perhaps to a hundred different towns and cities in the neighborhood of Bagdad." Hence, we may conclude that internal improvements were carried on throughout wide extents of country, as well as at Babylon, during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar; indeed, this was so much the case that his reign was specially distinguished for achievements in architecture, art, education, and commercial activity.

At last, in effect, he tells us with much self-satisfaction, that he had reached the highest point of his ambition; and it was about this time that the golden image was set up, probably for the purpose already indicated, though the elevation of this image symbolically represented the pride of the great king. Some have thought that the image was of himself instead of Bel-Merodach; and if this was the case then it intensifies the suggestion that it fitly represented the king before his fall. This view of the matter is certainly worthy of consideration. Still it does not destroy the force of the contrast between what the king was and what he soon came to be, even if the image was that of Bel-Merodach. In any case it embodied Nebuchadnezzar's ideal of his own greatness and the splendor and extent of his reign. Hence, it is from this high pedestal that we are to behold the fall of the Chaldean king.

It is not necessary to give the details of the dream in which the king's humiliation was clearly portrayed. These may be found in the fourth chapter of Daniel. But it may be interesting to read the following vivid passage by Dr. Joseph Parker on dreams as a means of punishment: "Let us not tamper with this graphic language, but take it as it stands in the English tongue. Nebuchadnezzar 'saw' a dream: it was part of himself, yet it was wholly outside, so that he could fasten his eyes upon it; it was in him and without him, above him, round about him, beneath him; and he was 'afraid.' Sometimes we ask the question, Do dreams come true? Why they *are* true. A dream does not need to come true, because it is there, a fact; it is already part of the history of the brain. There need be no other hell than a dream. Who can count the resources of God? In a dream we can be burned; in a dream we can be encoiled by serpents; in a dream we can be eternally suffocated; in a dream the serpent's fang may be within one inch of striking our life, and we may have no power of resistance or flight. The dream made Nebuchadnezzar afraid, and Nebuchadnezzar was not accustomed to fear, for he had brass enough, iron enough, chariots enough, horsemen enough; at the blast of his trumpet an empire stood up in his defense: but a dream made a fool of him. You cannot strike a dream; you cannot lay your hands upon it and compel it to make terms with you. These are the resources of God. If he would fight us with lightning we could make some device that might catch the lightning and bear it away; if he would fight us always with whirlwinds we could order our masonry accordingly, and hide ourselves behind the granite wall till the great Euroclydon cried itself to rest: but he will not do this; he will trouble us with dreams, and make us afraid with visions; and whilst we are flourishing in the palace he will make the floor tremble under us, or there will be a movement behind the screen, the curtain, the arras, and that movement will frighten us more than we ever were affrighted by thunderstorm at midnight. If Nebuchadnezzar had heard that an army was thundering at one of the gates of Babylon, he he would have been delighted: war is the amusement of kings; battle is the recreation of royal luxury and ambition: but this was a dream that came through the great brass gates that made the great wall of Babylon memorable as one of the finest structures in the world. You cannot bar out a dream, or lock it out, or bolt it out, or set a watch to keep it out; a wakeful sentry,

armed at every point, may be looking at the dream while it touches him, and he cannot touch it, or blow it back, or threaten it, or defy it; it smiles upon him, and passes on, to work its murder in the king's head and the king's heart, and turn the king's imagination into an intolerable perdition. When Pilate was puzzled about the new king, and the new theology, and the unheard-of sedition which was not written in the Roman books, 'his wife sent unto him, saying, have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.' God has made great use of dreams in history. Spiritual impressions may be laughed at by those who read nothing but cold type; but they are regarded as having unutterable suggestion to those of a more sensitive and exalted order of mind."¹

As in the case of the first dream, Nebuchadnezzar sent for the wise men of Babylon to interpret for him. But they were wholly unable to give the meaning. When they had failed, Daniel came before the king and finally gave the interpretation. It is rather remarkable that the king did not send for Daniel at once, in view of what had transpired with respect to the dream of the image; but it is possible that the king meant to make another test of his magicians; or perhaps his pride had lifted him far above any recognition of either Daniel or the God whom he served. This latter view corresponds more exactly to the character of Nebuchadnezzar at this time, and it seems also to justify the punishment which he subsequently received. Daniel's interpretation, as addressed to the king, was as follows: "It is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king: that thou shalt be driven from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and thou shalt be made to eat grass as oxen, and shalt be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee; till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule."² This language was followed by an earnest exhortation to the king to break off his sins by righteousness and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor so that there might be a lengthening of his tranquility.

At the end of twelve months the dream was literally fulfilled. The king was walking in the royal palace of Babylon and was in the very act of saying, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" And while the word was in the king's mouth there fell a voice from heaven proclaiming that the time had come for the fulfillment of the dream, and the same hour was Nebuchadnezzar "driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hair was grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."³

Many opinions have been expressed by commentators as to what was the character of Nebuchadnezzar's illness. At present there seems to be a very general concurrence in the view which ascribes to him a certain species of insanity called zoanthropy or tycanthropy, and this interpretation is strengthened from what the king says in reference to his recovery. His words are, "mine understanding returned unto me." Undoubtedly his understanding left him during his illness; and from the description of the whole case, physiologists have concluded that his affliction was a certain kind of madness in which, according to Dr. Pusey, "the sufferer, while retaining his consciousness in other respects, imagines himself to be changed into some animal, and acts, up to a certain point, in conformity with that persuasion. Those who imagine themselves changed into wolves howl like wolves, and (falsely, as there is reason to believe,) accuse themselves of bloodshed. Others imitate the cries of dogs."

This condition does not necessarily imply that Nebuchadnezzar was entirely unconscious of his real identity. He imagined that he was an ox, and acted accordingly, eating grass and exposing himself in the fields to all kinds of weather. Still he may have been able to attend to

¹ People's Bible, Vol. XVI.

² Daniel iv, 24-26 (Revised Version).

³ Daniel iv, 33 (Revised Version).

ordinary business, notwithstanding the sad hallucination under which he was laboring. Dr. Browne, the Commissioner of the Board of Lunacy for Scotland, speaking from an experience of thirty years, says: "My opinion is that of all mental powers or conditions the idea of personal identity is but rarely enfeebled, and that it is never extinguished. The *ego* (self) and *non ego* (not self) may be confused. The *ego*, however, continues to preserve the personality. All the angels, devils, dukes, lords, kings, gods, many that I have had under my care, remained what they were before they became angels, dukes, etc., in a sense, and even nominally. I have seen a man declaring himself the Savior, or St. Paul, yet sign his own name James Thomson, and attend worship as regularly as if the notion of divinity had never entered into his head. I think it probable, therefore, because consistent with experience in similar forms of mental affection, that Nebuchadnezzar retained a perfect consciousness that he was Nebuchadnezzar during the whole course of his degradation."

But whether Nebuchadnezzar's conscious identity remained with him or not it is certain that his punishment was very great; and it has puzzled some writers that no reference is made to this affliction of the king by any of the ancient historians. But there is nothing, after all, very strange in this omission. Even Berosus is mainly indebted to Nebuchadnezzar's own inscriptions for the facts respecting that monarch's reign; and it would be unreasonable to suppose that the proud king would perpetuate on tablets or stone such an episode in his life. But even if Berosus knew of the affliction referred to he would probably say nothing about it, as his admiration for Nebuchadnezzar would lead him to pass over so unpleasant an incident. The Eastern kings had a habit of perpetuating only such things as glorified their reigns, and it is not surprising, therefore, that the temporary fall of the great Chaldean ruler is found recorded only in the Book of Daniel.

It is pleasing, however, to notice the fact that this affliction seemed to change the whole aspect of Nebuchadnezzar toward the God of the Hebrews. It is not known exactly how long the affliction lasted, as it is impossible to tell just what is meant by the "seven times" that were to "pass over him." But whether seven days or seven years, there can be no doubt about the influence exerted upon Nebuchadnezzar himself, for when the king's understanding returned to him he "blessed the Most High and praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion and his kingdom is from generation to generation." And he, furthermore, extolled and honored the King of Heaven, declaring that all his "works are truth and his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

These are the last words we find recorded of the great king whose long reign was so intimately associated with the Jewish captives in Babylon; and in concluding this chapter, it may be interesting to note a few things suggested by the closing days of one of the greatest rulers of antiquity.

(1) There is no specific reference anywhere as to where or how Nebuchadnezzar died. Berosus says that he suffered from a lingering sickness before his death. Megasthenes, after mentioning that he invaded Libya and Iberia, goes on to say that the king went up to the top of his palace and was there overpowered by some god, and said: "'I, Nebuchadnezzar, foretell to you, O Babylonians, the calamity which will befall you, which both Bel, my forefather, and the queen Beltis, are unable to persuade the fates to avert. A Persian mule will come, who will find your gods his allies, and will bring slavery upon you.' . . . He then, after uttering his oracle, disappeared."

(2) While we may not attach much importance to such a statement as the foregoing, his last words, as recorded in the Bible, cannot fail to suggest the strong probability that finally the great king was brought to worship the true God. And if such was the case, then the affliction to which reference has been made is only another illustration how God "from seeming evil" is "still educing good." The good in this case was of a threefold character: the king was

blessed, the captives received more favor, and the true God was glorified. Surely such a result as this was worth all it had cost in suffering and anxiety.

(3) If we take the whole history of Nebuchadnezzar, included in the erection of the golden image and his own terrible abasement, we shall find in it an important lesson to human governments as well as to individuals. With respect to Nebuchadnezzar's affliction, John Ruskin has the following memorable passage in "Modern Painters": "This Nebuchadnezzar curse, that sends men to grass like oxen, seems to follow but too closely on the excess or continuation of national power and peace. In the perplexity of nations, in their struggles for existence, in their infancy, their impotence, or even their disorganization, they have higher hopes and nobler passions. Out of the suffering comes the serious mind; out of the salvation, the grateful heart; out of endurance, fortitude; out of deliverance, faith; but when they have learned to live under providence of laws and with decency and justice of regard for each other, and when they have done away with violent and external sources of suffering, worse evils seem to arise out of their rest, evils that vex less and mortify more, that suck the blood though they do not shed it, and ossify the heart though they do not torture it. And deep though the causes of thankfulness must be to every people at peace with others and at unity in itself, there are causes of fear, also — a fear greater than of sword and sedition — that dependence on God may be forgotten, because the bread is given and the water sure; that gratitude to him may cease, because his constancy of protection has taken the semblance of natural law; that heavenly hope may grow faint amidst the full fruition of the world, that selfishness may take the place of undemanded devotion, compassion be lost in vainglory, and love in dissimulation; that enervation may succeed to strength, apathy to patience, and the noise of jesting words and foulness of dark thoughts to the earnest purity of the girded loins and the burning lamp."

These words of Ruskin are supported by the testimony of history. It is a suggestive fact that very few nations have been able to maintain dominion where they have been invaded by a self-conscious security during the reign of peace. Indeed, in many instances, it seems that the pursuit of culture instead of war has been fatal to national prosperity. Why is this? Is it because war is essential to progress and peace contrary to national safety? Surely not. What, then, is the explanation of the curious fact to which reference has been made? It certainly cannot be said that war and refinement are helpmeets to each other. On the contrary, it may safely be affirmed that a highly educated, polished, and refined people cannot perpetuate their civilization by military power. Especially is this true where the religious element enters largely into national life.

How, then, are we to understand this matter? Evidently we must not resort to war methods in order to maintain a peace footing. Arbitration is the only method for settling difficulties when once we have passed through the war period of national existence. History furnishes abundant evidence of the truth of this statement. While the Greeks cultivated the "manly arts," as they are called, and gave much attention to the development of physical strength, they were invincible in battle. But when they had been led, by Pericles and other rulers, to a high degree of mental culture during a period of peace, they lost their military prowess and became easy victims to the superior strength of the rude, warlike nations around them.

The Roman empire fell in the same way. The basic principle of its civilization was force. It had been built up and perpetuated by the sword. And as it is forever true that "they that take the sword" must "perish by the sword," we find that, so soon as the intellectual culture of the people overcame their relish and aptitude for war, they fell under the superior military power of the uneducated and uncultivated barbarians whom every Roman had been taught to despise. The Roman empire did not fall, as is generally supposed, because the people had no worthy leaders, or because the people themselves had become extravagant, but rather because

both rulers and people had risen above that culture in which military power is an essential element of success. The ruin came because it was attempted to perpetuate the empire by warlike means, when the warlike spirit and prowess had departed before a growth of intellectual and social culture which demanded peaceful negotiations as the means by which all difficulties should be solved.

The workings of this same principle may be seen in some of the present nationalities of Europe. Many of the oldest of these are falling into decay, while those that a few years ago were known only for their rudeness, are rapidly coming up to the first importance. Why is this? Is it because France is intellectually feeble, that she is no longer a match for Germany? By no means. It is rather because France has outgrown the possibilities of war to perpetuate her existence. And as she failed to recognize this fact, she failed to adopt the true policy of national ripeness; namely, the solution of difficulties through the instrumentality of enlightened statesmanship. Germany is just now in the war period, and is in the height of her glory. It will not be long before the German civilization will be turned backward, if the German people do not exchange the arbitrament of the sword for the more enlightened policy of peaceful negotiation.¹

In view of what has been stated, it is not surprising that Nebuchadnezzar's encouragement of culture only increased the dangers which surrounded him, and finally led to the fall of the empire under the almost peaceful reign of Nabonidus. Both of these kings encouraged the peaceful arts without adopting the law of national life which is necessary to the perpetuation of a cultured civilization, or a civilization which has outgrown the war spirit. If Nabonidus had been as wise in avoiding war as he was in encouraging the peaceful arts, the final catastrophe which happened during his reign might have been averted. He ought to have either been prepared for war or for peace, and the first step in preparing for battle is the adoption of arbitration as the means of settling international difficulties. There is, however, another matter to be considered from the peace standpoint. Luxury, frivolity, vice, and all other evil ways, nearly always come in like a flood tide during times of peace. This ought not to be the case, and it will not be the case when religion holds its proper position and wields its normal influence. This was largely the weak point of Nebuchadnezzar. He was religious, but his religion was for the most part superstition. At last this superstition found its embodiment in the golden image which was set up in the plains of Dura. From the time that image lifted its head in the rising sunlight Nebuchadnezzar began to fall, and he never rose again until, through the saddest affliction, he was led to acknowledge and honor the God of all the earth.

¹ See author's "American Civilization," *Christian Quarterly*, Vol. IV.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FALL OF BABYLON.

IT has been truly said that "Man proposes, but God disposes." Nothing, perhaps, more distinctly marks the reign of providence in the affairs of men than the final fate of Babylon. The prophecies concerning the fall of the great city are so vivid and so precise that they have all the value of veritable history; and these prophecies have been so literally fulfilled, so far as we are able to verify the facts of the case, that even where facts of history are wanting or confused there is really justification for following the prophecies in order to supply these defects.

Jeremiah's prophecies are especially valuable with respect to the fall of Babylon. He was loyal to his countrymen even when they were disloyal to him; consequently when Zedekiah and the captives associated with him were carried away, Jeremiah wrote a prediction on a roll and committed it to the care of Seraiah, the officer in charge of the royal gifts, with instructions that he should read the roll to the exiles after reaching Babylon, and afterward tie a stone to it and sink it in the Euphrates, repeating at the same time a form of prayer and concluding comment thus: "O Jehovah, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, so that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate forever"; and after the book sank out of sight in the waters, he added, "thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I, Jehovah, bring upon her; for the Babylonians will, in their turn, wax faint and perish." This prophecy was proclaimed about a half century before its fulfillment, and it is remarkable that it should have been proclaimed, first of all, right in the country against which the prophecy was delivered. It was doubtless read to the captives in secret before the roll was destroyed. However, the original was left by Jeremiah, and whoever will read the fiftieth and fifty-first chapters of his book cannot fail to be impressed by the remarkable character of the prophet's predictions concerning the great city whose doom is so distinctly foretold.

No doubt Jeremiah intended the reading of the roll to the captives to be an encouragement to them. They are not only reassured as to their own deliverance, but they are informed with a literalness which must have made a deep impression upon them, that their oppressors would finally be punished, and Babylon itself should become desolate, so that no one should dwell in it, neither man nor beast. The vividness of the prophet's picture is truly wonderful, and the accuracy with which he forecasts both the fall of the city and the return of the Jews makes it impossible for us to doubt that he was guided by divine wisdom in every word he uttered. It must be remembered that this prophecy was spoken at a time when the Chaldean empire was at the height of its glory, and when there was no sign at all of its decay.

It has already been shown that with the death of Nebuchadnezzar the coming doom of the empire began to be foreshadowed. It was during the reign of Nergal-Sharezer that a great revolution occurred which exerted a powerful influence on both Western Asia and Europe. This revolution was the overthrow of the old dynasty in Media and the foundation of the Persian empire by Cyrus the Great. His accession probably took place in 558 B. C.

It is difficult to reconcile all the statements of ancient historians with respect to the period under consideration. Xenophon and Herodotus differ in several particulars, but enough is known from these and other writers, as well as from the chronicle of Nabonidus and Cyrus, to make it certain that Cyrus dethroned Astyages, the last king of Media, and transferred the rule over the Medo-Persian empire to the royal family of Persia. The capital of the new dynasty was fixed at Ecbatana (Agbatana).

When the news of the revolution effected by Cyrus reached Crœsus, king of Lydia, the latter determined on an attempt to check the growth of the Medo-Persian power. Accordingly he sent envoys to Amasis, king of Egypt, and to Nabonidus, king of Babylon, to unite with him in an alliance against Cyrus. It is probable that about this time Nabonidus constructed the great defenses of Babylon, including the works for inundation of the surrounding country. Meanwhile Crœsus crossed the Halys, where he met Cyrus, and after a severe battle was defeated and shut up within the walls of Sardis; and this was soon followed by the capture of Crœsus and the extension of the undisputed dominion of Cyrus as far as the *Ægean* Sea.

The conflict with Babylon did not properly begin for nearly fifteen years afterward. During this interval Cyrus was engaged in finishing the conquest of the tribes of Asia Minor and in strengthening his power in Media. Nabonidus contented himself with building defensive works at Babylon; and, though cultivating the arts of peace, he was really inviting the invasion which soon followed. His own people were by no means reconciled to his reign, and needed only a pretext to betray him into the hands of his enemies. This was especially true of the priests. Nabonidus appears to have attempted a revolution in religious matters; and in his effort to establish a monotheism he came in conflict with the prejudices and self-interest of the priests as well as many of the people. He, therefore, found himself at last threatened with an invasion by Cyrus, while at home he had not the hearty support of certain influential classes who had been alienated from him by the king's revolutionary notions with respect to religion. At length Cyrus left his capital and, crossing the river *Gyndes*, began his march on Babylon.

The rest of the story relating to the fall of the city is involved in considerable uncertainty. However, taking all that is said by historians in connection with the chronicle of Nabonidus and Cyrus, the following facts seem to be fairly well established:

(1) A battle was fought at *Uh* with the troops of *Askad*, and Nabonidus was defeated. At the same time the inhabitants of *Askad* rose in rebellion. Soon after this battle *Gobryas*, governor of *Gutium*, and the troops of Cyrus entered Babylon without a battle.

(2) The capture took place during a feast.

(3) The son of Nabonidus died or was slain.

There is no important difference of opinion with respect to a battle being fought prior to the capture of the city. There is very general agreement that such a battle did take place. The testimony is also strongly concurrent that the capture took place during a feast; and it is very noteworthy that this point, as well as the preceding one, was clearly indicated by the Prophet *Jeremiah* in the very roll which accompanied the captives to Babylon. It is worth while to quote a passage from this remarkable prophecy: "I laid nets for thee, and thou wast taken, O Babylon, when thou didst not expect." Evidently the city was so strongly fortified that the inhabitants believed it to be impregnable, and hence *Herodotus* speaks of the astonishment of the inhabitants at its capture. The Prophet *Isaiah*, also, in referring to the fall of the city, said that God would open before Cyrus the "two-leaved gates" and that he would "break in pieces the gates of brass and cut in sunder the bars of iron." Now, these prophecies were literally fulfilled when the city was captured.

The third fact mentioned above needs to be specially emphasized. It must be remembered that the "chronicle," to which frequent reference has been made, is far from being perfect. If the last column had been preserved intact it is probable that the concluding portions of the narrative of *Berosus* would be vindicated. As it is, there is a striking agreement between the historian and the chronicle. They both place the capture of Babylon in the seventeenth year of the reign of Nabonidus; both refer to a preliminary battle in which the forces of Nabonidus were defeated by Cyrus; and both refer to the flight of Nabonidus and to his intrenching himself in or near Babylon; *Berosus* mentioning *Borsippa*, which was in the close neighborhood of

Babylon. There has been some difficulty in settling whether reference is made in the chronicle to the death of Nabonidus himself, for whom mourning was prescribed, or that of his wife, or son. Mr. Pinches, of the British Museum, regards the true reading of the doubtful passage as *u mar šarri imât* — “and the son of the king died.” Doctor Hagen suggests the shafel *ušma-at* instead of *ima-at* or *mita-at*, and this would justify the rendering — “and [Gobryas] slew the son of the king.” Doctor Schrader is willing to accept Mr. Pinches’ suggestion. If this view of the matter should be finally adopted the whole difficulty would be practically cleared up. As Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus and co-regent with his father, Daniel’s account of the feast of Belshazzar and the death of the king is at once strikingly corroborated by the testimony of the tablets.

There are still some apparent contradictions. Both Herodotus and Berosus ascribe the capture of Babylon to Cyrus, while the chronicle says that Gobryas, with the troops of Cyrus, captured the city. But there need be no serious difficulty with respect to this matter. No doubt Cyrus directed the operations, and the fact that his troops are mentioned in the chronicle shows conclusively that, whether he was present or not, he was really the director of the operations which led to the final capture. According to Herodotus, I, chapters exc and exci, Cyrus having advanced upon Babylon, the Babylonians marched out of the city, and awaited him. Upon his approaching near the city, the Babylonians came into collision with his troops, were defeated in battle, and shut up within the city rampart. They had long foreseen the siege, and had taken precautions to meet it by the accumulation of provisions. For a time Cyrus was in considerable perplexity. At length he stationed the whole army, some at the point where the river enters the city, and the rest behind the city at the point where the river issues from it. He then gave orders to the army to enter the city whenever they saw that the river-bed had become fordable. Having made these dispositions and given these instructions, he himself retired with the noncombatant portion of his army. “Having arrived at the lake, Cyrus did to the river and the lake what the queen of the Babylonians (Nitocris) had done. By diverting the stream, by means of a canal, into the lake, which was at that time a marsh, he made the old river-bed fordable, when the river had subsided. When this subsidence had taken place, the Persians, who were posted for that express purpose, entered Babylon by the river-bed of the Euphrates, after it had retired to the depth of about the middle of a man’s thigh. Had the Babylonians obtained previous information of, or had understood what Cyrus was doing, they would not have allowed the Persians to enter the city, but would have destroyed them utterly. For, having closed all the gates that open on the river, and having themselves mounted on the stone dams that lined the edges of the stream, they would have taken them [the Persians] like fishes in a weel. But as it was, the Persians came upon them unexpectedly. Owing to the size of the city, when, according to the report of the inhabitants, the distant portions of the city were captured, those of the Babylonians who occupied the center of the city did not realize that they were in the hands of the foe; but, as there happened to be a festival, were at this time dancing and enjoying themselves until they learnt the reality in grim earnest.”

Now, while this account seems to differ in some respects from that given by the cuneiform inscriptions, there is nothing in it, after all, which contradicts what the inscriptions distinctly say. It is true that they do not mention some of the facts related by Herodotus. But if we had the inscriptions intact, it is at least probable that they would corroborate the testimony of the Greek historian. Undoubtedly what Herodotus says not only sustains the main points of the account in Daniel, but also the prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah.

The description of Belshazzar’s feast in the Book of Daniel is as remarkable in its vividness as it is true to the facts of history. It has already been seen that the inhabitants of the city felt themselves perfectly secure against the attack of Cyrus. The great feast was, no doubt, planned by Belshazzar in order to inspire courage in the hearts of the people. It is quite

possible that the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah may have been repeated at this particular time, and it was perhaps for this reason that Belshazzar caused the vessels of the sanctuary, which had been taken out of the temple at Jerusalem, to be brought, so that the king, his princes, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. He wished to show his contempt for the God of the Jews whose prophets had spoken evil against Babylon. "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote." At the sight of this Belshazzar was very much frightened, and cried aloud to bring the enchanters, the Chaldeans and the soothsayers, and, though he offered them the highest inducements, none of them could read the writing nor make known to the king the interpretation. Of course, this only increased his perplexity. At this moment the queen, probably his wife, or, as some think, the wife of Nabonidus, and Belshazzar's mother, came into the banquet house and reminded the king of how Daniel had interpreted his grandfather's dream, and urged him to call Daniel that he might interpret the inscription on the wall. When Daniel came into the presence of the king he at once repudiated the gifts which the king offered, but agreed to read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation; and after telling Belshazzar that he had not humbled his heart, though he had abundant reason to do so, and had lifted up himself against the Lord of Heaven, and had desecrated the vessels of the holy sanctuary, he then proceeded to read the writing, which was MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. The interpretation he declared to be as follows: "God hath numbered thy kingdom and brought it to an end; thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting; thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." It is further stated: "In that night Belshazzar, the Chaldean king, was slain. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about three-score and two years old."

Such was the tragic end of the Chaldean dynasty, according to the Book of Daniel; and the story of the fall of the city, as related by Xenophon, in his "Cyropædia," instead of being romance as some have thought, turns out to be veritable history. According to him, a feast was held practically in harmony with the description given in the Book of Daniel. Meanwhile Gadatas and Gobryas, with Babylonian nobles whom Belshazzar had alienated from him, found an entrance into the city by the river-bed, which they had drained, and, coming to the palace gates, found these shut. The account then goes on as follows: "And they that were posted opposite to the guards, fell on them, as they were drinking, with a great deal of light around them, and used them immediately in a hostile manner. As soon as the noise and clamor began, they that were within, perceiving the disturbance, and the king commanding them to examine what the matter was, ran out, throwing open the gates. They that were with Gadatas, as soon as they saw the gates loose, broke in, pressing forward on the runways, and, dealing their blows amongst them, they came up to the king, and found him now in a standing posture, with his sword drawn. They that were with Gadatas and Gobryas, being many in number, mastered him; they likewise that were with him were killed; one holding up something before him, another flying and another defending himself with anything that he could meet with. . . . When day came, and they that guarded the castles perceived that the city was taken and the king dead, they gave up the castles."

It is possible that all the particulars that have now been given with respect to the fall of the city may not be fully substantiated, if further light should be thrown upon the subject; but it is believed that the summary presented is in harmony with the facts of the case, so far as these facts are at present revealed. But it is not needful to dwell longer on the *manner* of the capture. The fall of the city is the main point to be considered in connection with the exiles, for this was regarded by them as a necessity prior to their return to their native land. The great city that had made the nations of the earth drunken with her own wine had now fallen at

a wine banquet. She who had been the “*hammer*” of God with which to break to pieces the wicked nations surrounding her, had now received punishment for her own sins, and that, too, under conditions distinctly foretold by the Prophet Jeremiah. The inhabitants of Babylon “may roar like lions; they may growl like young lions, (yet) while they glow (with lust) I will prepare their drinking feasts, and will make them drunk that they may rejoice, and then sink into a perpetual sleep, never awaking, saith Jehovah! I will drive them down like lambs to the slaughter house, like rams and he goats! How is Sheshach”—that is, Babylon—“taken! How is the city that was the wonder of the whole earth made a prize! How is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations!”

It must not be supposed that Babylon was completely destroyed by Cyrus. The prophecies concerning its fall do not necessarily imply this, though they do imply its final destruction in the most radical sense. Twenty years after its capture by Cyrus it was stormed by Darius Hystaspes, and at this time it received more damage than at the time of its capture by Cyrus. And it is probable that after this it went gradually into decay, though its complete destruction did not come for many years afterward. In any case it is certain that the predictions of the prophets concerning its final ruin and the desolation which was to follow furnish a remarkable example of the trustworthiness of such “forward-historians” as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The last said little, but what he did say is in perfect harmony with the other two prophets; and it is worth while to consider how far this remarkable fulfillment of prophecy should be taken into account when we are weighing the value of historical descriptions and the incomplete and unsatisfactory statements of the tablets. We have no means of verifying all the statements of ancient historians, and the fragmentary testimony of the tablets cannot be implicitly trusted. But it is possible to compare the statements of the prophets with the actual ruins of Babylon, as they have existed since its final destruction, and as they appear at the present time. It is, therefore, proposed to close this chapter by pointing out some of the fulfillments of the prophecies concerning the destruction of the city as a proof of the complete trustworthiness of Scriptural testimony.

(1) The first thing that will strike the reader of the prophecies is the apparent contradiction which exists between two sets of statements, one of which ascribes the desolation of Babylon to the action of water, while the other speaks of the water as “dried up” and the site of the city “cursed with drought and barrenness.” Isaiah’s prophecies speak of the water while Jeremiah’s speak of the barrenness. The facts in regard to the ruins of the city make both statements perfectly correct. Travelers have noticed both of these aspects. The neglect of the embankments and canals which were formerly a defense to the city has exposed a great part of the site of Babylon to the continual invasion of floods from the Euphrates, and when these floods recede the water left in the lower grounds stagnates, leaving large tracts, once included within the walls of the city, covered with lakes, pools, and marshes. It is likewise true that the vast mounds which cover the ancient site literally fulfill the predictions of Jeremiah. Ker Porter says: “The whole surface of the mounds appears to the eye nothing but *vast irregular hills of earth*, mixed with fragments of brick, pottery, vitrifications, mortar, bitumen, etc., while the foot at every step sinks into *the loose dust and rubbish*.” And again: “*Every spot of ground in sight was totally barren*, and on several tracts appeared the common marks of former building. It is an old adage that ‘where a curse has fallen grass will never grow.’ In like manner *the decomposing materials of a Babylonian structure doom the earth on which they perish to an everlasting sterility*.” Sir Austen Layard says: “On all sides fragments of glass, marble, pottery and inscribed bricks are mingled with *that peculiar nitrous and blanched soil* which, bred from the remains of ancient habitations, checks or destroys vegetation, and *renders the site of Babylon a naked and hideous waste*.” So it will be seen that, instead of the prophets contradicting each other, their testimony is strongly corroborative.



ROBERTS.

THEBES.

(2) The prophets emphasize the fact of the absolute loss of inhabitants. The city was to be entirely depopulated. This could scarcely be believed to have been fulfilled were not the testimony overwhelmingly conclusive. It is not generally true of such cities as Babylon that their sites are entirely abandoned by human beings. Many of the ancient cities that have been destroyed have been either rebuilt or the sites are still occupied by a few residents, however imperfectly their abodes represent the former splendor. Not so of Babylon. It soon became, and has continued to be, an absolute desert. Strabo, writing in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, described the site of the city as a "great solitude," while Jerome says that the Persian kings had made it into one of their "paradises," or hunting parks. Its ruins furnished materials for building Seleucia, Ctesiphon, and other cities. Modern travelers bear practically the same testimony. "All around is a blank waste," is a summary of what these travelers say. Isaiah says, "neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there"; and so far as the mass of ruins, which now mark the ancient site, is concerned, this has also been literally fulfilled.

(3) The prophecies note the fact, with a great deal of precision and emphasis, that the foundations of Babylon were to fall, and her lofty and broad walls were to be thrown down; and furthermore, that she was not to present the appearance of a ruined city at all, but to "become heaps" or mounds. All travelers agree that this is the actual state of the ruins as they now exist. These ruins are referred to as "shapeless heaps of rubbish," "immense tumuli," while the walls have disappeared entirely. This seems almost incredible in view of the character of the city as it existed before its capture, and yet there can be no doubt about the present appearance of the ancient site. Surely this fact alone is sufficient to establish the trustworthiness of the prophecies concerning the fate of Babylon. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied that the "wild beasts of the desert shall lie there." Mr. Rich says "there are many dens of wild beasts in various parts, in one of which I found the bones of sheep and other animals, and perceived a strong smell like that of a lion," while Ker Porter not only found the abodes of jackals and other savage animals, but actually saw through his glass several lions on the summit of the great mound at Bir Simrond, and afterward found their footprints in the soft soil of the desert at its base.

The complete obliteration of Babylon has a certain significance when studied in connection with the Exile. It is suggestive to notice the fact that the nations that have oppressed God's chosen people have always received punishment in due time. Although Babylon was made the instrument for chastising the Jews, when the period of this chastisement came to an end, the hand which inflicted it was paralyzed, and the great city, in which God's people were oppressed, had at last to pay the penalty in a destruction which amounted to annihilation. Nothing could more emphatically testify to God's love for his own and his hatred of those who oppress them.

The fate of Babylon also clearly indicates that God does not approve of evil in order that good may come. Undoubtedly one object of the Captivity was to benefit the exiles; to make them better men and women; and to prepare them for the new society which the prophets pointed out would follow the return to Judea. At the same time, God did not approve of the oppressors, either in carrying away his people into captivity or in treating them unkindly while they were in Babylonia. This suggests a marked feature in God's dealings with men. The crucifixion of Christ was a great blessing to the world, but the Divine Father could not look with complacency upon those who took the life of his son. Evil may be overruled for good, and when God is dealing with it, this is sure to be the case; but it is evil all the same, no matter what the end may be. It is precisely this wonderful fact which makes a directing providence such a consolation to all who heartily believe in such direction. Hence "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

There is still another important matter, suggested by the fall of Babylon, in its relation to the Jews. Not only has the city of Babylon been literally swept from the earth, but the people who inhabited Babylonia, over whom the great sultans reigned during the Exile, have practically lost their identity among the people of earth. Not so of the Jews. Though their national existence has been broken up, and though they have been scattered throughout the world, they have maintained their identity as a distinct people wherever their lot has been cast. What is the meaning of this? Surely it cannot be explained on any other hypothesis than that God means them to be a perpetual monument, a living testimony, and a striking emphasis of the promises which he has made concerning his people, both as regards themselves and as regards the nations which are to be blessed through them.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEW MASTERS AND NEW TRIUMPHS.

WHO was Darius the Mede? This question suggests one of the difficult problems of history. There is no doubt about the fact that Cyrus was the real conqueror of Babylon. But it is also true that with him properly begins the Persian dynasty. At the same time there are reasons for believing that the first year of his reign actually begins two years after the capture of Babylon. This would at once explain how two years of the Captivity could be accounted for, which on any other hypothesis cannot easily be made to correspond with the seventy years which, according to prophecy, should be the duration of the Exile. When, however, we reckon two years for the reign of Darius the Mede, before the reign of Cyrus properly begins, then a difficulty that has been long felt at once vanishes.

Several theories have been advanced in order to explain who Darius the Mede was. Some very able writers have recently identified him as Darius the son of Hystaspes. But there are many reasons why this view cannot be sustained. We know the entire descent of Darius the son of Hystaspes, and there are very strong evidence that he was of pure Persian race and had not a drop of Median blood in his veins. Again, it has been thought by some that the word *Darius* is the name of an officer, such as governor, rather than a proper name, and these identify Darius the Mede with Gobryas, who, the tablets declare, was made governor of Babylon after its capture. But there are objections to this view which are far greater than the difficulties it overcomes; consequently it must be rejected without much ceremony.

A few well established facts may help us to get at the truth of this matter. It is a fact that Gobryas held the position of governor for only a short time; it is also a fact that Cyrus was much occupied with his campaigns in other quarters, and was probably unable to give attention, for two years at least, to civil affairs at Babylon. It is further a fact, as stated by Herodotus, as well as by the inscriptions, that Astyages was conquered by Cyrus in the very beginning of the latter's great career. But Xenophon tells us that Astyages was succeeded by his son Cyaxares, who sent for Cyrus to help him repel a threatened invasion of the Babylonians. Cyrus accepted this proffered alliance. It must also be noticed that the success of Cyrus in conquering Astyages was greatly facilitated by a revolt of the latter's own subjects against him and in favor of Cyrus. This at once made Cyrus the friend of the Medians, and more readily disposed him to form an alliance with Cyaxares. Hence, he did not treat Media as a conquered country, and probably arranged for the succession of Cyaxares, though from Xenophon's account it is evident that the dominion of Cyaxares over the Medes was largely nominal.

The people gave their affection to Cyrus rather than to Cyaxares, and this may have led Cyrus to make another disposition of his Median ally by appointing him king over Babylon.

This view is strengthened by the statement of Xenophon that Cyrus told Cyaxares that "a house and a dominion awaited him at Babylon." Xenophon further states that Cyaxares gave his daughter in marriage to Cyrus with the succession to the Median throne, as Cyaxares had no son. It is well known that for some reason or other Cyrus was anxious to conciliate both the Medes and Babylonians, and was fond of appointing Medes to high office. It is, therefore, highly probable that Cyaxares the Mede, the son of Astyages, was the Darius who "took the kingdom" and "*was made king* over the realm of the Chaldeans," according to Daniel. Both of these expressions clearly indicate that some other than Cyrus occupied the throne. Evidently Darius the Mede "received" or "took" the kingdom *from the hands of another*, or was made king by Cyrus. This view of the matter is more or less sustained by Josephus, Prideaux, Hales, Hengstenberg, Von Lengerke, and others. It is true that Herodotus declares that Astyages had no male offspring, but is it not possible that the Greek historian confounds Astyages with his son Cyaxares, who, according to Xenophon, had no male offspring?

Some have thought that Darius was not Cyaxares, but his son, and therefore the grandson of Astyages and first cousin to Cyrus. The name Cyaxares corresponds to *Ahasuerus* and at once makes intelligible the statement in Daniel that Darius was the son of Ahasuerus. As Cyrus was about sixty years of age at the taking of Babylon, it is probable his cousin was sixty-two, and this again corresponds to the Biblical record. But if Astyages was alive when Darius "took the kingdom," he would have been more than a hundred years old. As Cyrus was born in 599 B. C., Darius may have been born in 600 B. C., and this would make the former sixty-one and the latter sixty-two, in 538 B. C. This view harmonizes very well with all the known facts, if we except the statements of Herodotus and Xenophon, the former declaring that Astyages had no son, while the latter says Cyaxares had none.

In any case it seems fairly certain that Darius the Mede was appointed by Cyrus to govern Babylon precisely as he appointed Nabonidus governor of the country of Carmania. Cyrus did not assume the position of sole ruler at Babylon until after the two-years' reign of Darius, and this view is strongly supported by the Book of Daniel, which says: "Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian"; and also by the testimony of Fr. Lenormant, who, referring to the two-years' reign of Darius, says: "I have found an indication of it in this significant fact, that, on the Babylonian and Chaldean contracts in cuneiform writing, Cyrus is designated king of Babylon, king of the nations, only from the third year, counted from the capture of the city. In the contracts of the first and second years after the capture, he is called only "King of the Nations." This seems to clearly imply that someone else besides Cyrus was king of Babylon for two years after the fall of the city, and the Book of Daniel fills this space with "Darius the Mede."

But be this as it may, and let Darius the Mede be identified with whomsoever we wish, the facts stated in the Book of Daniel have not been shaken by either ancient historians or recent discoveries. The latter have tended to confirm the statements of Scripture, and this has been so much the case, it is now believed that if we had the unbroken testimony of the tablets we should have a full and satisfactory confirmation of all the facts stated in the Book of Daniel; and it is hoped that the activity just now displayed in making excavations in Babylonia will bring to light the testimony which is still wanting.

At the same time it should be distinctly understood that there are good reasons for trusting the Book of Daniel rather than either the historians or the tablets. It has already been shown that there is solid evidence why the book should occupy the canonical position it does. Indeed, it is very difficult to understand why Herodotus, or even the tablets, should be trusted more than a book which contains all the internal evidences of truth, and which must have been

written near the time the events took place which are recorded in it. But notwithstanding this fact, there are those who are ready to believe the fragmentary testimony of a broken cylinder, whose age and authorship are both somewhat doubtful, in preference to a book which has been preserved in the sacred archives of a people which, though frequently scattered, have never lost their distinct identity. The miracle of the Jewish people has not had its due weight in determining the authority of the documents which have come down to us through them. We have not yet learned the full force of the apostle's language when he tells us in the letter to the Romans that the Jews had intrusted to them the "Oracles of God."

Of all the exiles at Babylon, Daniel was undoubtedly the most distinguished. Others occupied important places among the Jews themselves, but Daniel was more or less prominently associated with the Babylonian government. After the death of Nebuchadnezzar the great seer passes out of sight until the fatal night of Belshazzar's feast, when he suddenly comes to the front again. But it was under Darius the Mede that Daniel's true character shone out in its most distinguishing light.

He was probably born about 620 B. C., in the reign of Josiah, and as he was carried away to Babylon in 606 B. C. he was about fourteen years old when he reached the great city where he was to spend the remainder of his days. He must have been a remarkable youth, for he was one of those who was selected for the king's service, and, as the qualifications for this service required nobility, beauty, skill in wisdom, cunning in knowledge, understanding of science, and power to stand physical and intellectual strain, he must have been a very promising lad to meet all these requirements. He was at once put into training that he might learn the Chaldean language and become familiar with the culture which at that time was a marked feature of the Babylonian civilization.

This special training lasted three years, and we may be sure that Daniel made rapid progress under his new masters. At the very start he showed his independence and also his devotion to his Jewish traditions, by refusing to eat the prescribed allowance for such students, consisting of bread, meats, fruits, fish, game, wines, etc. "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore, he requested of the prince of eunuchs that he might not defile himself." The language of Daniel was most courteous but it was firm, and after proving that he could live on herbs and water, and make a better appearance than those who used the king's diet, it was decided to let the youth have his way.

This glimpse at the early life of Daniel will help to prepare us for the great test to which he was subjected under the reign of Darius the Mede. It will be remembered that on the accession of Darius the administration of the kingdom was committed to one hundred and twenty satraps, or subordinate governors; and that over these were appointed three superior presidents of whom Daniel was one. It must be noted, also, that on account of the excellent spirit which was in Daniel he soon became distinguished above the other presidents, and this was so much the case that the "king thought to set him over the whole realm." This at once excited the envy of the other presidents and satraps, who sought occasion against Daniel that they might destroy his power with the king. Daniel's justice interfered with their dishonesty, and they were therefore anxious to have him disgraced or removed out of their way.

It is probable that they were also influenced by the fact that he was a foreigner, and, worse than all, a captive, whose place was servitude rather than the wearing of distinguished honors. But whatever the controlling motive of his enemies may have been, they determined to get rid of him, and to do this without any respect to the justice of the means employed. But this is the way of envy or spite. First of all, they sought to find fault with the administration of public affairs, but they could not place their finger upon a single thing wherein they could accuse him with respect to the discharge of his official duties; and this is the highest possible

compliment which could be paid to Daniel's administration. Nevertheless, they knew their man, and were therefore not long in selecting a point from which to attack him. Consequently, they said "we shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." They immediately concentrated all their efforts at this point, and finally persuaded the king to sign a decree that whoever should ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save the king himself, should be cast into the den of lions. "And when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; (now his windows were open in his chamber toward Jerusalem;) and he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."

This is precisely what his enemies expected Daniel would do, and they therefore felt confident that their device had succeeded, and no doubt exulted accordingly. But when Daniel's conduct was made known to the king, he "was sore displeased, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he labored until the going down of the sun to rescue him." However, the king's intercession was all in vain, as the law of the Medes and Persians could not be changed; consequently the king commanded that Daniel should be cast into the den of lions, though he seems to have thought that in some way Daniel's God would deliver him. A stone was laid upon the mouth of the den, and sealed with the king's own signet, and that of his lords, so that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. It is evident from these precautions that Darius was determined that Daniel should have fair play in the matter that his accusers should not have the semblance of an excuse, if Daniel's life was preserved.

After everything had been made secure the king went to his palace and passed a sleepless night in fasting, and when the morning came he went early in haste to the den of lions and cried with a lamentable voice, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live forever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceeding glad, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he had trusted in his God."¹

The result of this trial was not only a triumph for Daniel and an overthrow of his enemies, but, like all unwavering trust in God, the end was the prosperity of Daniel and the honor of the God whom he worshiped. The king published a decree, commanding that all men should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, while the record closes with the suggestive statement that "Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian."

Before dismissing this man of God it may be well to summarize a few of his most prominent characteristics:

(1) He never separated his own life from the God whom he worshiped. He was religious in the best sense. In all the affairs with which he was identified he always reckoned with the divine factor in human history. This made his character doubly strong. In a word, it united human and divine strength in all that Daniel undertook to do.

(2) He was always true to his honest convictions. This of itself is almost an unconquerable force in any character. With Daniel the only question was, What is duty? It was not his to ask the reason why; wherever duty led him he unhesitatingly followed. He evidently studied faithfully the law of God, and whatever that enjoined upon him, he accepted without the slightest regard to consequences.

(3) His was a life of faith; he endured because he believed the promises. He looked forward to the redemption of Israel from the Exile, and also to their redemption through the coming Messiah. In short, he believed in the final triumph of all who trusted in God, even

¹ Daniel vi, 20-25 (Revised Version).

though that triumph must be preceded by trials of the severest kind. In this he illustrated what is a common principle in every life. To believe in victory is victory half won, but to doubt is to court defeat.

It is no part of this work to enter into an exposition of the remarkable prophecies of Daniel. Reference has already been made to his dreams and visions, and it is now only needful to emphasize the wonderful precision with which he foreshadowed the most important historic events from the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede until the end of the Christian dispensation. Of course, the whole of this period has not yet passed, but the verifications of Daniel's prophecies, with respect to the return of the Jews, their history up to the coming of Christ, the death of the Messiah and the subsequent fortunes of the Church, down to the present time, inspire the fullest confidence. That which is yet to come, as predicted by Daniel, will surely happen, just as he foretold it.

The prophecy of the seventy weeks has long been a debating ground for expositors, but there is a very general agreement that they represent four hundred and ninety years, reaching to the time when the Messiah was to be rejected and cut off. The chief difficulty has always been to agree upon a definite starting point. But reckoning from the decree of Artaxerxes,¹ in seven weeks or forty-nine years, Jerusalem would be rebuilt; in sixty-two weeks, four hundred and thirty-four years, the Messiah would begin his ministry; and in the middle of one week, or three and one-half years, he would be cut off. There are other ways of computing this time which may be more satisfactory to the reader, but, whatever may be the method adopted, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the coming of Christ, the destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the Jews, and the spread of the Messiah's kingdom are embraced in the scope of Daniel's prophecies.

It must not be forgotten, however, that the whole period embraced in Daniel's prophecies has not yet passed, and it may be we shall be able to recast some of our reckonings when we have the light of all the facts before us; undoubtedly some of the difficulties which are now in the way will then be removed. Nevertheless, the parallel historic facts are already sufficiently clear to show the great value of Daniel's prophecies in demonstrating the presence of the divine factor in all the affairs of human history. At the same time, the very difficulties which exist with regard to past events should make us cautious with respect to what is yet to come to pass. Surely there is no room for dogmatism concerning the future of Daniel's prophecies. Indeed, the main object of prophecy is to confirm divine testimony, and consequently its main value is retrospective rather than prospective. History is prophecy teaching by example, but it is more than this; it is a practical demonstration of the truthfulness and fidelity of God with respect to all his promises; and in no part of history is this great purpose more distinctly and emphatically shown than in the prophecies of Daniel and the fortunes of the Jewish people.

The truthfulness of prophecy is unmistakably illustrated in the case of Cyrus. In Isaiah, forty-fourth and forty-fifth chapters, the conqueror of Babylon is mentioned by name as God's shepherd who would perform all his pleasure, even to proclaiming that Jerusalem should be rebuilt and the foundations of the temple be laid. Cyrus is also called the Lord's anointed, whose right hand the Lord holds to "subdue nations before him" and to "loose the loins of kings; to open the doors before him and the gates shall not be shut," etc. This, it must be confessed, is very definite prophecy, and as if to make some explanation for this definiteness the Lord goes on to say, "for Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel my chosen, I have called thee by thy name: I have summoned thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the Lord, and there is none else; beside me there is no God; I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me: I am the Lord, and there is none else."

¹ Ezra vii, 8-11.

This language is so remarkable that some modern critics have assigned this portion of Isaiah to a period after the fall of Babylon. These writers contend that the naming of Cyrus, and, indeed, the whole description as to his mission is so precise and so perfectly in harmony with the facts of history that whoever made the record must have done so after the facts had transpired. But all such criticism only shows the great value of the prophet's predictions. And there is nothing peculiar in this case except the naming of Cyrus, and, as if anticipating just such criticisms as have been made on this passage, the Lord gives a most reasonable explanation of the whole matter. But in any case it is absurd to find fault with this portion of Isaiah on account of the definite precision with which he predicts future events. The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as well as others, use the same definite style, and yet no one supposes that their records were written long after the events had transpired. But the passages in Isaiah are written in the form of prophecy, and have a prospective bearing. The style is descriptive of events yet to come and not of events which have already happened.

It is probable, also, that this very prophecy of Isaiah was intended to be a comfort to the exiles during their captivity. They would not only feel assured that the time of their deliverance would come at the end of the seventy years, but the moment they would hear of the victories of Cyrus over Crœsus and the dethronement of Astyages, the Median king, they would feel confident that their deliverer was nigh. Doubtless this portion of Isaiah was frequently read in the meeting places of the captives, where the prophecies of Jeremiah were also read to comfort the waiting exiles. Probably Ezekiel and Daniel added their own testimony to the fact that the prophecy of Isaiah would certainly be fulfilled at the end of the seventy years. And though Ezekiel died before Cyrus began his conquering march toward Babylon, Daniel still lived to identify the new power which was rising in the northeast, with the Cyrus who had been named in Isaiah. And this view is emphasized when we remember that the main consolation of the captives was the teaching of the prophets. Though they still possessed the law, it was really of little value while they were in exile. It required the environment for which it was intended in order to make it effective. In short, the law was for their national existence and not for the period of exile. This fact made the teaching of the prophets most important to the Jews while they were separated from their native land.

It is not at all improbable that even Cyrus was made familiar with the prophecy in Isaiah concerning him, and this may have had considerable influence upon him in finally determining his course with respect to the captives. Indeed, it may have encouraged him to make the invasion he did, and may have even helped him in his capture of the city, since the prophecy clearly points to the very means by which it was finally taken. But, however this may have been, it is very clear that the whole course of Cyrus shows that he was a wise ruler as well as a great conqueror, and there is certainly no reason why we should doubt that as God's instrument to carry out a great purpose he was divinely guided with respect to whatever was necessary to its accomplishment. In any case it is certain that what we know of him justifies us in ascribing to him the following characteristics :

- (1) He was a brave and skillful general. He knew not only how to strike but when to strike.
- (2) He was an able statesman. He made a wise use of his victories. We have already seen how he conciliated Media by giving them a ruler of their own blood, and how he offered this ruler help when it was needed. We have seen, also, how either this same ruler or his son was made king of Babylon after the city was captured. This last was a stroke of policy which marks a high degree of statesmanship. Media and Babylonia were practically one under the Chaldean kings, and it was, therefore, an act of conciliation on the part of Cyrus to give a ruler to Babylon who was practically of their own people.

- (3) Cyrus fully recognized religion as a most important factor in human affairs. He was probably deeply religious himself, and it is almost certain that in his heart of hearts he was a



DAVID ROBERTS.

JERUSALEM FROM THE ROAD TO BETHANY.

monotheist, and really believed in the true God, though for prudential, political reasons he recognized the polytheism of the nations with which he had to deal. Probably his religious views were considerably confused by the numerous systems with which he came in contact ; but he was, at least, tolerant of all, and in this respect he possessed much of the modern spirit as regards religious liberty. Nabonidus had made a great tactical mistake in having the local deities removed to Babylon, where Merodach was made chief. This gave offense to all the provincial towns, and was no doubt one reason why many nobles and other citizens of Babylonia joined Cyrus in his attack upon the city. One of the first acts of the conqueror was to restore these deities to their original localities and to give the people the privilege of worshiping according to the dictates of their own consciences.

It must be remembered that Cyrus was a foreigner. He was not even a Persian, but an Elamite, and was king of Elam before he was king of Persia. Canon Driver and others think that the reference in Daniel to Cyrus as a Persian proves the late composition of the book. It is not easy to see how this is true. If to call Cyrus a Persian was a mistake, the mistake is much easier to account for if made at a time when the Persian influence was dominant than if made during the Maccabean period. However, no mistake was made. It was altogether proper to speak of Cyrus, the Persian, when referring to him as king, for the reason that he introduced the Persian dynasty to Babylon.

But it is with the proclamation of Cyrus that we are concerned at present. This included the Jews as well as others who at different times had been settled in Babylonia from other countries ; and to the Jewish exiles he granted special privileges. His proclamation was issued during the first year of his reign, which was the third year after the capture of Babylon. We have already seen that Darius the Mede reigned two years before Cyrus began to exercise kingly authority over Babylon.

The act of Cyrus in granting the Jewish captives the great privileges set forth in his proclamation was one of noble generosity, no matter how much it may have been a political movement when considered simply from the standpoint of statesmanship. But it may be questioned whether the king was influenced by any other consideration than a willingness to carry out what he believed to be the will of Jehovah. In any case it is highly probable that he was largely influenced by Daniel in the wording of the great proclamation which he published with respect to the captives. It is to be hoped that this very proclamation may yet be found among the buried treasures of Babylonia.

CHAPTER IX.

HOME AGAIN.

IT must be remembered that there were other colonies in the Persian empire besides the Jewish. The kings of Babylon had followed the policy of removing from the conquered towns and districts many of the inhabitants to desolated regions, or to the vast area included within the walls of Babylon. At the time of the invasion of Cyrus it is probable that these foreign elements had become a considerable power throughout the empire, and being somewhat disaffected toward the central government, Cyrus had not much difficulty in securing the aid of these elements in his attack upon Babylon. This fact may account for the general character of his proclamation; but it does not account for the special privileges which he granted to the Jewish exiles. We have already seen that he was influenced by the Jewish prophets, and especially by Daniel, in his generous treatment of the Israelites; for it must not be forgotten that his proclamation embraced all who had been carried away from Samaria as well as from Judea; and, as has already been intimated in a former chapter, there can be little doubt about the fact that many of the Ten Tribes were included in the number who set out for Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Cyrus over Babylon. After the Return the new nation was called Jews, but the tribal distinctions disappeared except in their pedigrees.

The first great band who avail themselves of the privileges granted in the decree of Cyrus was led by Sheshbazzar, who is probably the same as Zerubbabel. This identification has been disputed by some who think that two distinct names would not be used in the same connection to refer to the same person without some explanation. But this difficulty is not serious when it is understood that the narrative in the Book of Ezra is not in the form of a homogeneous history. It must be remembered, also, that it was a common habit in those days to give two or three names to the same person, and this was specially true of captives in Babylon. However, if the two names do represent different persons we must suppose that Sheshbazzar's position was only temporary and that he was quickly succeeded by Zerubbabel. Sheshbazzar is called the Prince of Judah, and he seems to correspond to the description given of Zerubbabel.

The whole number of the congregation accompanying Zerubbabel was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, besides seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven menservants and two hundred singing men and singing women. Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six; their mules, two hundred and forty-five; camels, four hundred and thirty-five; their asses, six thousand seven hundred and twenty. Among the chief men were Joshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Bilsham, Mispar, Bigrai, Rehum, and Baanah. It is rather remarkable that the numbers are so specifically given, but there was no doubt a good reason for this. It enables us to compare the number of those who returned with the number that had been carried away in the four deportations. But the number that returned at this time was small when compared with those who still remained in Babylonia. The enumeration includes the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin with the priests and Levites.

They did not return empty-handed. Their neighbors made them presents and encouraged them to take up their long and arduous march to the land of their fathers. Many freewill offerings were also made for the rebuilding of the temple, while Cyrus commanded his treasurer, Mithredath, to deliver the sacred vessels, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away, to the number of five thousand four hundred.

It is worth while to notice two very suggestive things connected with the Return. The first is the fact that the people go out of Babylon laden with the treasures of the country very

much as they went out of Egypt with the treasures of that country. It is also significant that the name of the high priest who led the exiles from Babylon is the same as that of Joshua who led the Israelites into the land of Canaan. The same name is applied to Christ, who is our Joshua or Jesus to save us from sin, to lead us to the heavenly Canaan, and to the new Jerusalem, the city of the Living God.

We have no record of the journey from Babylon to Jerusalem. The whole band consisted of about fifty thousand souls, under the command of Zerubbabel, a grandson of Jehoiachim, who was appointed governor of Judea. We cannot doubt that the journey was attended by many hardships, but all these were cheerfully endured by the now chastened and hopeful exiles. It is thought that the eighty-fourth Psalm is a description of their longing desire to behold the house of God, notwithstanding all the hardships of the way.

One of the conditions of the Return, as stipulated in the decree of Cyrus, was that the temple at Jerusalem should be rebuilt. It must be remembered that "the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia," to make the proclamation which gave the exiles the right to return to Judea, and we may be sure, therefore, that the provision about rebuilding the temple was a divine inspiration, probably coming to Cyrus through Daniel, who no doubt had considerable to do in wording the decree of the Persian king. But in any case the rebuilding of the temple was necessary to the new commonwealth which was about to be established. The kingdom, which came to an end with the destruction of Jerusalem, was never to be restored until Shiloh should come, and then only in the spiritual sense. It was never altogether popular with the people, and was no necessary part of the Mosaic legislation. The divine model was a theocracy, and this is what the Jews practically return to after the Captivity. During their exile they had kept up their worship in their synagogues, but they needed the temple to nationalize their religious life, as well as to provide for that homogeneity of worship which is always essential in a national religion.

The first act of the Jews, after their return, was to rebuild the altar of burnt offering, and this was speedily followed by the laying of the foundations of the temple. The latter took place probably in 534 B. C., or the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem. This account of laying the foundations of the temple has been regarded by some writers as unhistorical, on the ground that the beginning of the work on the temple is spoken of in Ezra v, 2, as taking place in the second year of the reign of Darius the son of Hystaspes, and that this view of the matter is practically sustained by the prophet Haggai who assigns the laying of the foundation of the temple to the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month in the second year of King Darius. It is furthermore pointed out that the governors in their letter¹ speak as if the work had been carried on without any special interruption.

There is nothing, however, in these apparent contradictions which cannot be easily explained. For instance, there is nothing in the expression "began to build," which necessarily contradicts the statements already made with respect to laying the foundations of the temple in 534 B. C. As the work was stopped for some years, the phrase "began to build" is fitly enough used to express what took place in the second year of King Darius. Evidently the language of Haggai has not been understood. The date which he gives is the date of his utterance, and from that time he refers back to the laying of the foundations of the temple. The statement of the governors was almost certainly made from information received by them from the enemies of the Jews, and they probably did not take the trouble to correct the impression these enemies made. In any case there is no sufficient evidence to throw the least doubt upon the statement that the work was begun by Sheshbazzar in the reign of Cyrus, that it was for a time hindered by the bitter opposition of the Samaritans, and that it was finally resumed under the reign of Darius and brought to completion.

¹ Ezra v, 16.

The laying of the foundation of the temple was an occasion of great solemnity. There was the sound of trumpets and also the chorus of the sons of Asaph, "praising and giving thanks unto Jehovah because he is good, for his mercy endureth forever towards Israel." But the joy of this occasion did not last long. The descendants of the colonists, who had been settled in Samaria by Esar-haddon, were anxious to form an alliance with the Jews, probably because they claimed kinship with them, or that such an alliance would be beneficial to them. They also knew that the Jews were especially favored by Cyrus, and this might make the alliance desirable. The Samaritans may have worshiped the true God, but they also "served their graven images." They claimed that they had worshiped Jehovah since the days of Esar-haddon, and it was on this ground especially that they offered to assist in rebuilding the temple. The Jews indignantly refused to allow these semi-idolaters and "adversaries" to have any part in a work which was regarded as intensely religious in its nature. They had been charged with a great duty, and their very existence, as a commonwealth, would depend upon their faithfully performing this duty. A mere political alliance might have been regarded with much more favor, but it was impossible for them to allow the Samaritans to participate in the building of a temple to Jehovah.

This refusal enraged the Samaritans, who, by hired influence at court and constant opposition at home, finally succeeded in arresting the work, greatly to the discouragement of the returned exiles, whose fondest hopes were blighted when they learned that the work had to be suspended. To some it has appeared singular that Cyrus did not enforce his decree, but his wars in Asia at this time were absorbing his attention so much that he gave little or no thought to the returned captives at Jerusalem. Neither did Cambyses, his son and successor, do anything to enforce the decree of his father. The reign of Pseudo-Smerdis was short, but he gave a willing ear to the representations of the Samaritans wherein they charged that Jerusalem had been destroyed for its continued rebellions. And if we identify Pseudo-Smerdis with Artaxerxes,¹ it is evident that the decree which completely stopped the work was issued during his reign of seven months. Darius Hystaspes succeeded Pseudo-Smerdis, ascending the throne 522 B. C. Two years afterward, through the influence of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, a new enthusiasm was kindled in the interests of the completion of the temple. The work was resumed in 520 B. C., and to the appeals of the prophets mentioned the people responded with alacrity and recommenced the work with great vigor. The Persian officials in the country west of the Euphrates made no objection to the work. Meantime an appeal was made to King Darius to search for the edict of Cyrus. This search was ordered, and the edict was found at Ecbatana, one of the cities where the Persian kings resided. As soon as this edict was found, Darius gave orders that the building of the temple should proceed; at the same time he gave assurance of state assistance, both for the construction of the temple and the maintenance of sacrifice. The temple was completed and the dedication took place in 516 B. C., during the sixth year of Darius Hystaspes. This was about eighteen years after the foundation of the temple was laid.

Some have thought the work was stopped fifteen years, others that the time was only nine years. But if we identify Pseudo-Smerdis with the Artaxerxes of Ezra iv, 7, then it is evident that only about three years elapsed from the issue of his decree, by which the work was completely stopped, until it was resumed again during the reign of his successor. Doubtless very little was accomplished for several years prior to the issuing of the royal decree of Artaxerxes, but it seems clear that the date of the complete stopping of the work must be fixed during the year 522 B. C. As the work of Ezra does not attempt to follow Persian history, it presents some chronological difficulties; but there is certainly no need to conclude that there is any such difficulty in the case under consideration. The only real difficulty is to determine what

¹ Ezra iv, 7.

Persian kings are referred to in the sixth and seventh verses of the fourth chapter of Ezra. If Ahasuerus be identified with Cambyses, then Gomates, or Pseudo-Smerdis, must be Artaxerxes.

There is another way out of the difficulty which arises from the introduction of Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes. These two names must be identified with Xerxes, who ascended the Persian throne in 485 B. C., and Artaxerxes I.—the Latin Longimanus. If this view be accepted most of the fourth chapter of Ezra must be regarded as chronologically out of place. This is supposed to have happened because the writer was aiming to give a connected account of the opposition to the Jews from their return to the time of the completion of the wall by Nehemiah. This view is supported by the fact that, in the letter written to Artaxerxes, reference is made to building the city, finishing the wall, and repairing the foundations, while no reference at all is made to the building of the temple, and for the reason that the temple had been completed many years before. This view compels a severance in sequence between the sixth and twenty-fourth verses of the fourth chapter of Ezra.

No matter which view may be taken there is a certain amount of confusion which must necessarily be encountered. If the writer of Ezra had attempted to give us an orderly succession of Persian kings there would probably be no difficulty about the matter; but as he refers to these kings only so far as they are related to certain facts in Jewish history, it is not always easy to make his kings correspond to the kings of that history as we have it from the ancient historians. Still, we must not forget that even these ancient historians are not always correct in their statements of some of the simplest facts, and especially with respect to the line of kings. Of one thing we are well assured. The facts of Ezra are thoroughly trustworthy, whether we can make these facts fit our chronological conceptions or not. Indeed, there is no inspired chronology, and consequently we must always receive with caution anything that depends upon chronological exactness.

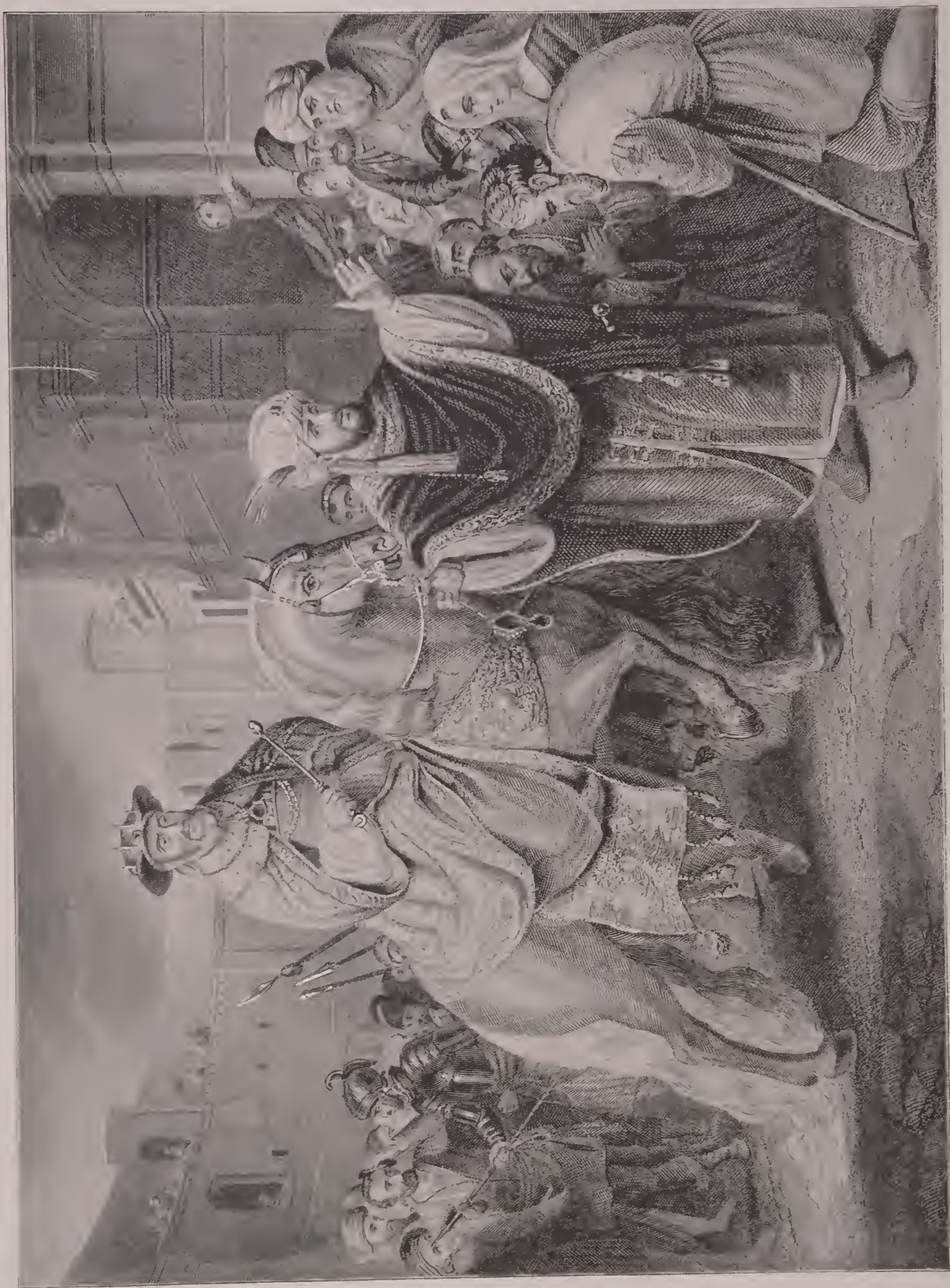
The dedication of the temple, at its completion, was an inspiring occasion, and the ceremonies included much that must have been impressive to the people. Seven hundred victims were offered for a burnt offering, and twelve goats were offered for a sin offering "*for all Israel*," one for each tribe. This fact shows very conclusively that other tribes, besides those of Judah and Benjamin, were represented in the returned "children of the captivity." Only four of the original courses of priests were represented, but each of these was divided into six, and in this way the number of twenty-four was restored, and also the old names were adopted. The whole ceremonies were concluded by the keeping of the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, and of the seven days of unleavened bread. But all the notes were not joyful. There were some present who had seen the former temple, and they therefore wept, partly for joy and partly for grief; joy because the new temple was completed, and grief because by comparison it came far short of the one which had been built by Solomon.

It is certainly very remarkable that the Book of Ezra passes over a period of nearly sixty years, during which the history of the Jewish community at Jerusalem is almost a blank. The Book of Esther partly fills this blank, and it is only necessary to determine who the Ahasuerus of the book is, in order to fix the date of the facts narrated in it. There can be little doubt that Ahasuerus must be identified with the Persian king known to the Greeks as Xerxes. This conclusion is reached from at least three considerations:

(1) The identity of the names, Xerxes being the Greek for *Akhashverosh*, the Hebrew spelling of the Persian name *Khshayarsha*.

(2) The character of Ahasuerus, as we find it in the Book of Esther, corresponds to the character of Xerxes as we have it in Grecian history.

(3) The extent of his empire makes the identification with Xerxes necessary. This extended from India even to Ethiopia, and this was not true of any Persian king before Xerxes. As his reign lasted from 485 to 464 B. C., the events recorded in the Book of Esther fall



THE TRIUMPH OF MORDECAI.

between 483 and 470 B. C. The Persian kings at that time had four residences in different parts of the empire. They spent the spring at Babylon, the summer at Ecbatana, the autumn at Persepolis, and the winter at Susa, the Shushan of Esther. This city was sacked and partly destroyed by Sardanapalus about the year 650 B. C., and it remained in a ruined state till Cambyses restored it to its former splendor; and at the time of Xerxes it was at the height of its new glory. It was here that a remarkable event took place which had far-reaching results on the destiny of the Jewish people.

Xerxes was a proud, haughty, vacillating, unreasonable despot. He had none of the ability of his father. He had been brought up in luxury, and consequently Susa was just the city where he could display the qualities which most distinguished him. The story of his invasion of Greece is well known. The battle of Marathon had been fought during the reign of his father, Darius Hystaspes, and Xerxes undertook to avenge that signal defeat of the Persian forces, a defeat which broke the power of oriental despotisms in Europe and practically changed the tide of civilization from a semi-barbarism toward the development of the highest culture. The story of the invasion of Xerxes and his final defeat in a great naval battle at Salamis is well known.

It was this proud, insolent Persian monarch who, in the third year of his reign, issued a decree that all the satraps from the different parts of his kingdom should be gathered by royal summons at Susa to prepare for the great expedition to Greece which ultimately ended so disastrously. The deliberations lasted six months and were attended by great pomp of feasting and luxurious entertainment. The object was to enlist all parts of the kingdom in the preparations for the grand invasion of Greece. The great conference at length ended by a banquet at which we are told fifteen thousand men sat down each day, at a cost of ninety thousand pounds daily, or about four hundred and fifty thousand dollars, seven days being required to feast the vast number invited. Recently the dining room in which this feast was held has been excavated, and it is found to have inclosed a space equal to an acre and a half with a double portico on three of its sides. Its decorations and the material out of which it is constructed, clearly indicate that everything was of the most costly character.

On the occasion of the feast Xerxes was seated on a golden throne, under a crimson canopy; and on the seventh day, when he was very much inflamed with wine, he ordered that his chief queen, Vashti, should expose herself in an indelicate way before his half drunken nobles. This she positively refused to do, and the result was that the infuriated king dismissed her and refused to recognize her any longer as his queen.

Four years succeeded, during which period Xerxes made his memorable invasion of Greece. He had returned to Susa, and doubtless needed the consolations of the harem. Vashti had been dismissed, and now the question was who should take her place. Finally Xerxes selected a young Jewess without knowing her nationality, and thus Esther became queen, and in her the Jews had a steadfast friend at the royal court.

It is not needful to relate in detail the tragic events which followed; how that Haman, probably the last of the Amalekites, a high court official, who, being stung by an affront from the Jew, Mordecai, succeeded in obtaining a royal decree for the destruction of the Jewish race throughout the Persian empire; and how Esther, who was the niece of Mordecai, not only obtained a practical reversion of the decree, but also such conditions as enabled the Jews to take vengeance on their enemies by slaughtering thousands of them. The whole story is so familiar that nothing more need be said about it here further than that the feast of Purim became the memorial of this national deliverance, and is even yet celebrated among the Jews.

The remaining period of this long silence in Jewish history is a complete blank. When the silence is again broken, the old actors on the scene when the return from captivity took place are all gone. The generations to which Zerubbabel and Joshua, Haggai and Zechariah

belonged have passed entirely out of sight. At the same time the chief power among the Jews has departed from the family of David. The sons of Zerubbabel have not succeeded him. The governors of Jerusalem who did succeed him were foreigners, and as such they probably did not sympathize with the policy which had been pursued by Zerubbabel and Joshua. It had been a time of testing. Though the temple had been completed before the long silence commenced, when we reach the end of the silence, it is evident that the religious conditions of the people had not improved. Indeed, it is certain that it had gradually grown worse and worse. Surely the outlook at this time was anything but encouraging. But it was the dark hour before the dawn.



THE BLESSED FUTURE.

CHAPTER X.

UNDER PRIEST AND GOVERNOR.

XERXES was succeeded by his son Artaxerxes Longimanus, 465 B. C. The new king was only a lad when he began to reign, and he had some difficulty at first in maintaining his position, but after seven months of indecision, he adopted a rigorous policy by punishing the murderers of his father, and soon made himself felt as a wise and powerful monarch. In the fifth year of his reign a rebellion broke out in Egypt, which was not finally suppressed till six years later; and it may have been that during this insurrection Artaxerxes was convinced that a wise policy required a judicious and kind treatment of the Jews, as they would be important allies in his struggle with Egypt. Or it may have been that he was reminded of the generous treatment which the Jews had received from Cyrus and Darius Hystaspes; and, as he was a truly great monarch, he was anxious to imitate the example of his great predecessors.

But no matter what was the moving cause, there can be no doubt about the fact that the new Persian king was disposed to be very friendly toward the Jews; and, in harmony with this feeling, he practically renewed the permission, which had been given eighty years earlier by Cyrus, for as many Jews to return to their native land as wished to do so. Consequently, he issued a decree to that effect, and he finally gave Ezra a commission in writing, expressed in very generous terms, granting among other things exemption to Jewish priests and Levites from the usual toll or tribute. It is well to remember that the Persian kings had already shown a fondness for elevating some of the Jewish captives into high positions of trust in the government, and it is not strange, therefore, that a man of Ezra's high character was able to secure the confidence of Artaxerxes. Doubtless Ezra had already proved himself to the king by some important service before his departure to Jerusalem. He had perhaps kept himself well informed of the progress of affairs in Palestine. There was frequent intercourse between the Jews there and those that remained in Babylonia. Indeed, the latter continued to send contributions to the former by special messengers appointed for that service, and by this and other means there was cultivated a very decided sympathy between the Jews of their respective countries. Ezra had no doubt already learned that the restored Jews had fallen into great declension and that their prospect was really very gloomy. It is not surprising, therefore, that he was deeply moved in their behalf, or that he was willing to lead a caravan to join those who were already struggling for a national existence in the land of their fathers.

It was in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, 458 B. C., that Ezra's caravan, numbering one thousand five hundred and ninety-six men, besides a certain number of priests, set out for Jerusalem. They carried with them also a liberal supply of wealth. The poverty of the Jews in Palestine was well known, both to Artaxerxes and the Jews in Babylonia. The king accordingly took this state of things into the account; and he, his chief counselors and lords made a large contribution, in gold and silver, which was intrusted to Ezra for conveyance to Jerusalem, where it was to be appropriated for the adornment of the temple and other purposes connected with the temple worship. A subscription was also taken from the non-Jewish inhabitants of the empire for the benefit of the Jews in Judea. The king also presented to the temple a number of vessels of great value, at the same time conferring the right on Ezra to draw upon the provincial treasuries in Palestine and Syria, within a specified limit, for whatever he might need. The whole contribution in specie amounted to six hundred and fifty talents of silver and one hundred talents of gold, the latter being worth perhaps four times as much as the former. The object of Ezra's mission was to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

It is not needful to follow the caravan to its destination. The journey occupied exactly four months. A halt of three days was made at Ahava for the purpose of collecting the caravan and making necessary preparations for the long march. As soon as he arrived in Judea, Ezra found the people were already infected with the very evil which had been the foundation of nearly all their former troubles, namely, intermarriage with the idolatrous nations by which they were surrounded. His mission was mainly religious in its aim, and, being well read in the law of Moses, he saw at once that the evil referred to must be removed before national prosperity could again come to Israel; and, in view of this conviction, he set about in earnest to effect a reformation. After public mourning and prayer, at the suggestion of some of the chief men, the whole people were summoned to Jerusalem on penalty of heavy forfeiture and expulsion from the congregation. This assembly took place on the twentieth day of the ninth month (December, 458 B. C.), and during the conference there was a great storm of rain. The result of this assembly was a general agreement to put away the strange wives by the beginning of the new year (end of March, 457 B. C.). At this point the narrative of the Book of Ezra ends, and the story of the Jews is not resumed again until thirteen years later.

What took place during this interval cannot be determined with certainty. However, from the scant information we have it is fair to conclude that the Samaritans and their allies had strongly opposed the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem. This wall had been in a broken condition ever since the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar, but it is probable it had not been completely dismantled and the gates burned until some time between 450 and 445 B. C. Meantime the news of this condition of the wall was carried to Nehemiah, who was a cupbearer of Artaxerxes.

It has been difficult to explain the sudden break in Ezra's narrative and his own comparative obscurity during the governorship of Nehemiah. It has been supposed by some that his policy of repudiating the mixed marriages had raised against him such a bitter opposition that he was forced into practical obscurity. It is supposed that for twelve years his opponents in Jerusalem made common cause with the Samaritans. Others think that, having accomplished the object of his mission to Jerusalem, with respect to mixed marriages and other evils, he left the city and did not return again until the dedication of the wall. One thing at least is certain: the condition of things at Jerusalem went from bad to worse, and it was only by the exercise of the strong hand of Nehemiah that any improvement took place.

Nehemiah was at Shushan when the news was brought to him by Hanani, one of his brethren, concerning the unfavorable state of things at Jerusalem. This was in the twenty-fifth year of Artaxerxes; and when Nehemiah, who was the king's cupbearer, came into his presence, the king noticed that his servant's countenance was sad. This led the king to inquire as to the cause, and when he was informed that this sadness came from the news which his servant had received from Jerusalem, he at once commissioned Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem and undertake the rebuilding of the wall. He also guaranteed him a suitable escort and gave him a governor's commission, so that Nehemiah was well provided for definite and effective work.

Nehemiah had waited four months for an opportunity of speaking to the king, but when the opportunity did come his patience was amply repaid. While he was waiting he was not idle. He spent a great deal of his time in praying to God that the heart of the king might be well disposed toward the plea which he had to make. The whole case is strikingly suggestive; there is a pathetic side to it which at once challenges our interest. But most of all we admire the patriotism of Nehemiah and his profound faith in the guiding hand of the God who had so often brought deliverance to the Jews. It certainly is a very impressive fact that all the movements of these great leaders were inaugurated by prayer and closed by thanksgiving. They began nothing without reckoning with that divine factor in human affairs to which attention has been so frequently called; and it is not possible for a rationalistic theory to explain this fact.

Undoubtedly the Jews, at least, have a history which is indissolubly connected with divine agency.

When Nehemiah and his escort arrived at Jerusalem, he found his worst fears more than realized. Before he reached the city he had learned of the hostility of Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the Ammonite; but this only nerved him to greater activity in preparing for his work. After the usual three days of rest or purification, he quietly reconnoitered the condition of the city by night, so that his movements would not be observed; as doubtless he did not wish to excite any special attention until he had made himself master of such details as would enable him to speak with authority. The result of his observations was the calling of the rulers to the work. All the rulers, except the nobles of the Tekoites, labored arduously and enthusiastically at their appointed stations.

The work had only fairly commenced when the opposition of the Samaritans became very marked. The city of Samaria was, at that time, held by a Persian garrison. The governor was Sanballat, who is called a Horonite. His nationality is not certain, but his position was one of dignity and influence. He and Tobiah, an Ammonite chief, were evidently in close alliance, though the latter was probably not a representative of the Persian government; still, no doubt, he occupied a position of considerable importance. It appears that Sanballat had also had some kind of connection with a sort of Arab sheik called Geshem, who had at his command a band of marauders who were always ready for just such work as Sanballat had under consideration. It seems that the latter was also allied by marriage to Eliashib the high priest, while Tobiah had married a daughter of Shechaniah.

This was a strong combination against Nehemiah, who had little time to organize a force with which to meet the threatened opposition. But emergencies not only make men but make expedients also; and opposition often defeats its own purpose by stimulating watchfulness and activity in those who are opposed. Nehemiah was not unconscious of the difficulties by which he was environed. But he was a man of courage and persistent determination. He had also that special characteristic which is always the accompaniment of good generalship, namely, the power to decide an important matter quickly; and having once made up his mind, he was not the kind of man to change it without cause.

He was not long in determining that he must count upon the persistent opposition of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, and consequently he made his arrangements accordingly. First of all, he sought the guidance and help of the God whom he served. This was a good beginning. The work which he was aiming to do had back of it all a religious inspiration. The temple had been rebuilt, and the city partially reinhabited, and the building of the wall was now an essential condition to secure that freedom of worship which was necessary to revitalize the temple service. It was proper, therefore, that a work which had such a religious aim should be inaugurated with a petition for help from the Divine Father.

But Nehemiah did not rely wholly upon prayer. We are told that they made their "prayer unto God and set a watch against their enemies day and night." In other words, they watched as well as prayed. This is the true philosophy of service. We should always unite the divine and human in all our undertakings, and these can never be separated in the affairs of human history. The same idea was continued throughout all the arrangements which Nehemiah made for defense as well as for carrying on the work. Indeed, the whole story of rebuilding the wall is full of suggestive analogies for every kind of successful work. They began by clearing away the rubbish in order to secure a firm foundation upon which to build; then all instrumentalities were united, while all parts of the organization were in touch with one another, so that, at the signal of the trumpet, help could be secured wherever it was most needed. But after all, the most important element, perhaps, in achieving the final success was the fact that "the people had a mind to work." That fact of itself was more than half the battle. We may

have every other advantage on our side, but if we have not a mind to work, in all probability we shall make little or no progress. This is especially true as regards the difficult work of rebuilding spiritual Jerusalem. And hence there is little hope that very much will be accomplished in the right direction unless we can inspire the people with a love for the work. If we look simply at an individual church we shall have a striking illustration of what must be true all round the wall. No matter how good a preacher a church may have, no matter how beautiful and comfortable the church premises may be, no matter how thoroughly united the people may be, and no matter how watchful and prayerful they may be, or how lovingly they may coöperate — all this will be of little account if the people have not a mind for the work itself. Indeed, so important is this preparation of mind, that with it there is practically no difficulty, while without it nearly everything is a difficulty. We never see how to work when we do not love the work.

As the wall began to rise, Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem attempted to bring the work into disrepute by making light of it. Tobiah even suggested that the wall they were building would not stand the force of a jackal if it should run against it. This is nearly always the method of enmity when a work is in an uncertain stage of progress, or has in it little promise of ultimate success. Making light of it is sometimes a successful way to hinder a work. Many people can bear almost anything better than to be laughed at. But Nehemiah and his associates were not to be driven from their work because their enemies affected to treat it with derision. So energetically and continuously did everyone labor that very rapid progress was made at all points, and it soon became evident to the conspirators that the wall would shortly be completed if the work was not stopped. And after every other measure had failed, as a last resort, Sanballat and his friends sought to decoy Nehemiah into a conference on the Samaritan border. Perhaps they hoped at this conference to intimidate him, or it may have been their purpose to kidnap him. But to all their entreaties Nehemiah had but one answer — “I am doing a great work so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it and come down to you?”

This reply of Nehemiah deserves to be carefully considered by all earnest workers. There are several steps always in a determined opposition. The first step is generally affected indifference; the next is contemptuous treatment of the work, if not of the workers; a third step is organized opposition; when this fails the next thing is to secure, if possible, a conference in which everything is sure to be decided in favor of the intriguers. This conference idea was the last hope of Sanballat and his friends; and when their first invitation was practically rejected, they sent another embodied in a formal document, which was left open so that the contents might be read by all. In this document they told Nehemiah that rumors were afloat that his object in rebuilding the wall was to enable him to lead a rebellion against the Persian government and finally to make himself king of the Jewish people. The object of these representations was certainly not to influence Nehemiah himself, for by this time his enemies knew that he was not likely to be intimidated by this last cunningly devised trick. But what they expected was that their document would fall into the hands of Persian officials and others, and would probably have the effect to place Nehemiah under strong suspicion of treason. This would have been fatal to his enterprises. But the plot failed, and certain other schemes, which either accompanied it or followed it, were equally unsuccessful.

The work continued, and finally, after fifty-two days, the wall was completed, though some days elapsed before the gates were finished and put into their proper places. At length, however, these were set up in the gateways, and then the work was accomplished for which Nehemiah had asked and obtained leave from Artaxerxes to visit Jerusalem.

There are many lessons in this incident of Jewish history. Among these lessons may be mentioned the following:

(1) The power of earnestness. One earnest man is more than a match for a thousand unrighteous schemers.

(2) The power of organization. Nehemiah had all his forces subject to a well-defined system which enabled him not only to bring every man into service, but so to dispose of him as to make his service count for all he was worth.

(3) The power of union. The work would never have succeeded had there not been perfect unity of action. This was manifest in every department of the work. First of all there was unity in the means used. The sword and trowel were united and made to coöperate in the work. The priests, workmen and soldiers made a common cause. Meantime the coöperation was so complete that every part of the work was always able to command whatever assistance was needed.

Just as soon as the wall was completed, Nehemiah began a reformation which finally marked a new era in the history of the Jewish people. He knew well enough that fortifications alone would not suffice for national defense ; consequently, he began to institute such reforms as he believed were necessary in order to preserve the solidarity of the Jewish community and give strength to their national aspirations. The work on the wall had brought some evils into prominence, and these, with others, Nehemiah set himself in earnest to correct. The poor had been oppressed by the Persian tribute which they had to pay, and in many cases they had to borrow from their rich neighbors. These rich nobles exacted extortionate interest, and when the poor were unable to pay it, their little holdings were seized and their children taken as slaves to serve their rich masters. This was one of the first evils which Nehemiah sought to reform, and the radical way in which he managed the case shows conclusively how seriously the evil was regarded. He abolished usury between Jew and Jew, but he did not stop there ; he required the money lenders to make full restitution by restoring the mortgaged property to their debtors. He furthermore took measures to provide for an increased number of residents in the city. This was an important measure in order to give efficiency to the means of defense.

But a still more important movement was that which restored the law to its normal place. For more than a century and a quarter the law of Moses had been almost obsolete in the affairs of the Jewish people. The teaching of the prophets had practically taken its place. No doubt portions of the law were occasionally read by the prophets and others in the synagogue during the Captivity, and there was some effort to restore the sanctions of the law under Zerubbabel and Ezra ; but for various reasons very little was accomplished in this respect until the governorship of Nehemiah. Prior to his time the law had remained exclusively in possession of the priests ; and, consequently, the people knew nothing about it, except by oral tradition. It was, therefore, a great step in the right direction when the law was again brought into contact with the whole Jewish people, and they were again made to feel its solemn sanctions.

At this time Ezra again came to the front. He was not only a priest but a scribe. His special function was to deal with the law, and it is probable that his reformation was partially a failure, for the reason that he insisted upon a rigid observance of the law before there was any definite organization to enforce his requirements. Under Nehemiah's governorship the conditions had somewhat changed, and it was now possible for the two men to work together in effecting a great reformation for the Jewish people. Accordingly there was a solemn recitation of the law by Ezra, during which the people stood up and wept ; and on a solemn fast day the ancient covenant was renewed, and the law which Ezra had read to his countryman was accepted as an authoritative rule of life for Israel. This covenant embraced specially the strict observance of the sabbath, the observance of the sabbatical year and its remission of debt, the payment of tithes and first fruits to the Levites, and a tax of one-third shekel to defray the expenses of the temple worship.

When everything was in readiness a great festival was held for the *Dedication* of the Wall

of Jerusalem. For this service the priests and Levites were called together from all the cities of Judea. These purified the walls and the people, while the rulers, divided into two parts, went round the walls in procession to the right and to the left, the one headed by Ezra and the other by Nehemiah, each being accompanied by priests and Levites who blew the trumpets and sang thanks to God. Finally the day was closed with sacrifices and shouts of joy from the people.

After his reforms had been inaugurated, Nehemiah returned to the Persian court; but in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes he again visited Jerusalem. At this time he found that some of the old evils which had been abolished had reappeared. But he was not the man to be utterly discouraged by this revival of old habits. He knew how deeply seated these habits had become, and he also understood the difficulties arising from the peculiar environment of the people. He found the temple was desecrated by the presence of Tobiah, with whom Eliashib, the high priest, had allied himself. The Jews had also again begun to contract mixed marriages, and, to make bad worse, it was found that the priests were prominent offenders. In fact, the high priest's own grandson had married a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite. The result of these things was beginning to be most disastrous. The Jewish children were beginning to lose their native dialect by frequent commingling with the children of the surrounding nations. The sanctity of the sabbath was also practically destroyed in the interests of trade with foreigners. While Nehemiah did not attempt to conceal his indignation, he immediately set about the purification of the temple and the gathering of the dispersed Levites together again, compelling the rulers to do them justice and the people to bring the tithes that were due them. He also strongly reproved the nobles for the profanation of the sabbath. His last reform dealt with the evil of the mixed marriages with the women of Ammon, Moab, and Ashdod. He exacted an oath of the offenders to abstain from all such alliances, and as an example to all the rest, expelled from the priesthood the grandson of Eliashib on account of his marriage with the daughter of Sanballat. What came of these energetic measures the sequel will show.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NEW COMMUNITY.

THERE are at least three factors which must be taken into account, if we are to understand the character of the new society which grew up in Judea under the formative influences of Ezra and Nehemiah. These factors are: (1) The Persian government, (2) The religious organization among the Jews, and (3) The post-exilian literature.

The first of these has not usually received the attention it deserves by writers on the period under consideration. It must never be forgotten that while the Jews had been permitted to return to their native land, they were not permitted to occupy the position they did prior to the Captivity. They were still subject to the Persian government, were compelled to pay tribute to that government, under Persian governors or satraps, while the officers with whom the Jews had immediate dealings were called Pekhahs. Each satrapy was probably divided into districts and the Pekhahs were the governors of these petty provinces.

The tribute was collected and remitted to the Persian king by the satraps. The amount assessed varied considerably in the different provinces, but it was everywhere an oppressive load upon the people. Besides the tribute in money there were other tributes levied, especially of grain, while there were "custom" and "toll" exacted upon merchandise, monopolies, etc. There were probably also special local taxes to defray the expenses of local governments.

The civil organization of the Jewish community was largely controlled by foreign influence. It is certain that the chief power rested in the hands of the Pekkah, and generally the Pekkahs were foreigners, though occasionally some of them were natives who had been in the king's service. The cases of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah were exceptional, and there is no evidence that Ezra ever occupied the position of a Pekkah. But even Zerubbabel and Nehemiah were governors under the authority of their Persian masters. They held commissions for certain purposes, and had authority to do certain things, but beyond these commissions they were not allowed to go. In short, the Jewish community, from a civil point of view, was no longer Jewish at all, except so far as the people themselves were concerned; and even the people, by intermarriage with foreigners, gradually lost some things which distinguished them from other communities.

One thing, however, must be kept in mind while studying this period of Jewish history. At this time the new community was more of a church than a nation. The work of Ezra was chiefly religious, and, though Nehemiah exercised civil authority over the people, the work which he did was also mainly intended for religious development. The temple was the center of everything pertaining to the national life, and this made the high priest a most important functionary, as it practically placed him at the head of the whole community. His office was hereditary, and this fact gave rise to a sort of religious dynasty, which finally, after the break-up of the Persian empire, placed the high priest in the position of a petty Jewish monarch. It is evident that his influence was not so potential in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah as it afterward became. Indeed, Ezra does not even mention the high priest. As he himself was a priest it is not improbable that he discharged the duties of his office, at least so far as he deemed it necessary to do so, without recognizing the high priest of the regular line; and there are strong evidences that Nehemiah paid very little attention to the high priest's authority, as he certainly, in one instance at least, acted directly in opposition to the high priest's wishes.

The ordinary priests are, for the most part, clearly distinguished from the Levites in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The former represent a superior class, occupying a position somewhere between kings and princes and nobles and rulers. They are sometimes called the sons of Aaron, and evidently were held in high esteem by the people during the Captivity as well as after the Return. It is worthy of remark that at the time of the Return the number of priests was four thousand two hundred and eighty-nine, being practically one-tenth of the whole company; and yet there were only four families represented in this number, namely, Jedaiah, Immer, Pashur, and Harim. However, during the high priesthood of Joshua and Jehoiakim, the number of families had grown to twenty-two. Ezra brought with him to Jerusalem two priestly families, one of the line of Eleazer and the other of the line of Ithamer. It is well here to notice the important fact that while the Book of Chronicles speaks of sixteen families belonging to the line of Eleazer, and eight to that of Ithamer, Ezekiel confines the priesthood to the "sons of Zadok," thereby limiting the priestly claims to one branch of the Eleazer line. As Ezekiel wrote during the Exile it is probable that some change had taken place in the priesthood succession, and, as there was no temple service during that period, this change may have been for the purpose of reducing the number of priests.

The Levites had certain functions to perform, but they occupied a very subordinate position. During the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, there were three inferior orders under the priests. These were: (1) Levites, (2) singers and porters, (3) Nethinim, or those who were the servants of the Levites. At the return from the Captivity there were only seventy-four Levites compared with the four thousand two hundred and eighty-nine priests, while Ezra had considerable difficulty in persuading thirty-eight Levites to accompany him when he went to Jerusalem. In the list of those who sojourned in Jerusalem, we find only two hundred and eighty-four Levites (including singers) and one thousand one hundred and ninety-two priests.

Another most important class was the scribes. These, in the later meaning of the term, had their origin, no doubt, during the Exile. The sopher, or scribe, was the title of the state official at the royal court, and his position was that of a secretary or chronicler. However, during the time of the Exile, an order grew up called Sopherim, the Hebrew for scribes, and their functions were to guard, transcribe, and interpret the sacred oracles. It must be remembered that at the same time the synagogue worship had its origin. The loss of the temple was partly supplied by these extemporized places of worship; and, as these places were doubtless quite numerous, in order to meet the convenience of the scattered captives, and as each one of these synagogues would need one copy at least of the sacred writings then in existence (especially the Pentateuch), it is easy to see how a number of persons would necessarily be employed in transcribing, reading, and annotating the sacred literature of the Jews, during the entire period of the Exile. Ezra's training was in this school, and it is not surprising that the order to which he belonged was perpetuated in the new community after the Return. Though the temple had been rebuilt, there was still need for a considerable amount of clerical work in connection with the extensive organization of the priests and Levites. A record had to be kept of the payment of tithes and offerings for the maintenance of the temple service, and there was also need for other secretarial work. The synagogues were transplanted from Babylonia to Judea, and, consequently, each of these synagogues still required at least one copy of the sacred oracles. This fact alone made the sopher a necessity.

Gradually, however, the most important function of the scribes became that of interpretation. They not only transcribed the law, but they were also its expounders. When Ezra read the law from the pulpit of wood the people were made to understand it by those who stood beside him. It is probable that Ezra gave the meaning first, and then this was communicated to the people who listened, in the languages with which they were most familiar; for it must be remembered that, at this time, at least three dialects of the Semitic language were spoken by the Jews, namely, the Aramaic, Babylonian, and Hebrew. It is probable also that many spoke the Canaanite or Phœnician language. And as Nehemiah found that the children of those who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab could not speak the Jewish language, but only a sort of mixture of that language and the language of Ashdod, it is probable that toward the close of the governorship of Nehemiah there was, growing out of the confusion of tongues, considerable difficulty in reference to the true meaning of the sacred canon. The scribes were generally learned men, able to speak fluently most, if not all, of the languages in common use. They were also necessarily familiar with the Book of the Law. Not only were they engaged in reading and expounding this book, but they also frequently transcribed it.

This brings us to the consideration of the third influential factor in developing the new Jewish community. Much has been written concerning post-exilic literature, but most of this has been based upon pure conjecture. This much, however, is fairly certain: the Old Testament Canon was settled during the time of Ezra, and certainly not later than the time of Malachi. If, as is generally believed, Ezra was chiefly concerned in the foundation of this canon, he may have lived long enough to add to his work the last of the Old Testament prophets.

There are many traditions connected with both Ezra and Nehemiah as regards the final settlement of the Old Testament Canon. It was believed by the early fathers that when the originals of Scripture were burned with the temple, Ezra was inspired by the Holy Spirit to restore the Law and the Prophets, and to write or authenticate the books which followed these. Another tradition affirms that Ezra, or Ezra and Nehemiah, instituted the Great Synagogue, numbering one hundred and twenty associates, and that it was in conjunction with them that the Old Testament Canon was settled. This tradition, however, was confined to the Talmud and finds no support in the Canonical or Apocryphal Scriptures. It is doubtful, therefore, whether

any such synagogue really existed for the purpose indicated, and it is more than doubtful whether either Ezra or Nehemiah had anything to do with such an institution. Recently a school of critics has arisen whose views are totally at variance with the traditional notions concerning the Old Testament Scriptures. These critics do not hesitate to invent an editor whenever his services are needed, and, consequently, they do not find much difficulty in placing the origin of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah in the second century before Christ, and in asserting that the three books were originally one and by the same editor.

However, this fanciful view has very little to support it. The traditional view assumes that the three books were originally distinct, that their true editor was Ezra, and that only a few additions were made after his time. While this view is more reasonable than that suggested by some extreme higher critics, it is nevertheless open to objections which are not easily overcome. Nevertheless, it is highly probable that Ezra either wrote in whole or in part the Books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, besides collecting, editing, and arranging the whole Jewish Scriptures, in one canon, under the threefold division of the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa. In performing this work he is supposed to have added those passages which cannot have been written by the authors whose names the books bear, such as the account of the death and burial of Moses. It is believed, also, that Ezra wrote several of the Psalms, especially the one hundred and nineteenth.

For the benefit of the general reader, it ought, however, to be distinctly stated that the time and place of fixing the canon cannot be definitely determined; nor is it certainly known who was chiefly instrumental in effecting this work. That which concerns us most is the fact that the canon was settled some time toward the close of the fifth century before Christ. Some have thought that the Prophet Malachi may have assisted Ezra in editing and arranging the books of the Old Testament, but even the name of this prophet is uncertain, and some have identified him with Ezra. Evidently his testimony fits well the condition of things found at Jerusalem at the time of Nehemiah's second visit there, and it is probable that his prophecy falls within the closing days of the fifth century, or about 400 B. C. In any case the Prophet Malachi properly connects the Old Covenant with the New, and this view of the matter is distinctly emphasized by the fact that the prophet predicts the coming of John the Baptist as the Elijah of the new dispensation, and as the forerunner of him who was to be the great deliverer of Israel, the Shiloh to come, to whom, more or less, all the prophets refer.

In any case it is inconceivable that several of the Old Testament books were not written till more than two hundred years later, and that the canon was not settled until the first part of the second century before Christ. The divine factor in Jewish history ceased to be so prominent after the days of Malachi, and it is scarcely probable that the remarkable providence which always guided in Jewish affairs would have left to uninspired men, and to a period when the divine presence was no longer especially assured, the important matter of determining the canon which was to be practically settled for all future time. Another fact needs to be very strongly emphasized. The whole hypothesis upon which those critics build who contend for a late period in settling the canon is a pure assumption, and virtually begs the very question in controversy. We are told that the period following after 400 B. C. was one of considerable literary activity, and that this was just the time when we ought to look for such a work to be done as that of settling the canon. But the Jewish Scriptures were nearly all written in Hebrew, and it is well known that the Hebrew soon ceased to be the language of the people, and whatever literary activity there was it certainly did not show itself in a Hebrew literature. Most of the works of the subsequent period were written either in Aramaic or Greek, but the Old Testament Canon was written not only in Hebrew (except a few portions in Aramaic, belonging to the Exilic period or to the period of Ezra and Nehemiah), but in such Hebrew characters as were used during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah — characters which no doubt

had a Chaldaic origin and were introduced by Ezra, who was familiar with both Hebrew and Chaldee. He used the "square" or Assyrian character, with certain modifications, probably to distinguish the sacred books which he edited from the Samaritan Pentateuch and Book of Joshua which retained the old Phœnico-Hebraic letters. However, a still more probable hypothesis is that he used the Babylonian characters because the people, during the Exile, had become more familiar with these characters than the Archaic letters of the Phœnician type. He, no doubt, wished to facilitate the study of the books in the collection, and, therefore, caused his copies to be made in characters best known to the people at that time.

It is no argument to say that this same character is still used in Hebrew copies of the Bible, and, therefore, the canon might have been made sometime after the days of Ezra. This is quite true, but it proves nothing. If the "square" character was used as early as the days of Ezra, then it is certain that Ezra could have edited the canonical books; that is the only point upon which it is necessary to insist; and this fact once established, the evidence is very strong that Ezra had much to do with determining and editing the canonical books of the Old Testament.

There is one thing, however, that needs to be emphasized with respect to this matter. Undoubtedly the "square" character was brought from Babylon, and the people were familiar with it during the Captivity and immediately afterward. Now, it is not probable that they went back to the old character for two hundred years and then returned to the new during the second century before Christ. Such a notion is as absurd as it is unhistorical. But if Ezra and Nehemiah introduced the new character into Judea, it is easy to see how it may have continued in use even to the present time. But if an interval is allowed, as some contend for, then it is inconceivable that the Babylonian character would again be adopted. This fact is alone sufficient to make it highly probable that the canon was settled in the days of Ezra.

The reference to the Samaritan Pentateuch suggests the origin of the Samaritan temple which was erected on Mount Gerizim. Just how this temple came to be built is not certain. Reference has already been made to Nehemiah's treatment of the high priest's grandson who married Sanballat's daughter. This act showed treasonable alliance with Nehemiah's enemy; it violated the rule laid down against mixed marriages; it also compromised the purity of the high-priestly house. It was no doubt for these reasons that Nehemiah chased the offender away. Josephus refers to a certain Manasse, the son of Jaddua, who took to wife Nikaso, the daughter of the Cuthean, Sanballat. Refusing to put his wife away, he was expelled from Jerusalem by the Jewish nobles and took refuge with the Samaritans, among whom, as a member of the high-priestly family, he set up a rival temple and priesthood upon Mount Gerizim. However, Josephus assigns this to the period of Alexander the Great, but there is conclusive evidence that long before Alexander's time the Samaritan worship had been fully established; and, as it is well known that the chronology of Josephus is sadly at fault in many places, it is probable that this incident which he relates may be identified with the grandson of Eliashib.

But be that as it may, it is certain that a temple was built upon Mount Gerizim and that this tended to widen the breach between the Jews and Samaritans, which continued during subsequent history and was certainly not healed even in the days of Jesus Christ. The Samaritan temple upon Mount Gerizim was destroyed by John Hyrcanus about 109 B. C. The remains of a temple are still to be found upon Mount Gerizim, and a small band of Samaritans still hold an annual sacrifice in its ruins. The oldest copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch is in possession of this little band of less than one hundred, who claim to be the genuine remnant of the Samaritans who once occupied the land. Meantime the Jews have been scattered throughout the civilized world; but amid all the changes which have taken place in their native land, the tribe of Judah remained intact until Shiloh came, and even now the tribe retains many of its original characteristics.

CHAPTER XII.

RECAPITULATORY SURVEY.

IF ever an ideal failed to be realized it was in the case of the Jewish people. There can be no doubt about the divine purpose in the Captivity. The nation had grievously sinned and God punished them for their sin; but he meant this punishment to result in their good. This was really the keynote in all the prophecies both before and during the Exile. Isaiah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Zechariah, Obadiah, and Ezekiel all had a note in their prophecies which looked to a regenerated society of the Jewish people that would illustrate a glorious period in Jewish history. There was to be a night of weeping—the long, painful captivity—but joy would come with the morning, when they should return to their native land rejoicing, rebuild the temple, reestablish the ancient worship, and again serve the God of their fathers.

This was the high ideal, and while all the prophets contributed more or less to creating it, Ezekiel, probably, more than any of the others, depicted it in glowing language. His temple was even more glorious than that of Solomon; his new society was a step in advance of either the old Israelitish commonwealth or the kingdom. It is true that he did not confine his vision to the period immediately after the Return. His look was far down the ages. He saw the coming glories of Messiah's reign and the spiritual temple which should be built out of the "lively stones" of the men and women in Christ Jesus. Nevertheless, it cannot be doubted that he, as well as the other prophets mentioned, gave an ideal picture of what the Jews would be immediately after the return from their Babylonian captivity.

Doubtless much of the optimistic language used by the prophets was intended for encouragement; and it must not be forgotten that most of this language is not so much in the form of a forecast as to what would actually take place, as in the form of an inspiring ideal to which the Jews could attain if they would learn the lessons aright which had been taught them. But be this as it may, it is certain that the ideal was not realized, for there was disappointment from the very beginning of the chapter to the end of it.

After all, no one need be surprised at this result. God can never give us less than the highest ideals. This he does in Christianity, and yet there is failure everywhere in realizing his ideals. The reason for this is not far to seek. Men and women are weak. The human side is always breaking down, however high its aim may be. God inspires by placing before us noble ends to be achieved and lofty ideals, but, alas, we fail to reach the one or to realize the other.

It is not strange, therefore, that the Jewish return was not equal to the glowing pictures of prophetic vision; nor even to the hopes of the Jews themselves. It is true that at the very start from Babylon there was an apparent lack of enthusiasm, and it is certainly somewhat remarkable that many of the exiles utterly refused to leave with Zerubbabel. They gave of their substance to help their brethren who were going, but it is estimated that less than half of the captives availed themselves of the privilege granted by the edict of Cyrus. It is freely admitted that when those who returned first reached Jerusalem there was something of the feeling manifested which had been foreshadowed by the prophets. But this did not last long. The opposition of the Samaritans very soon made the work of rebuilding both onerous and dangerous, and soon the first earnest zeal was exhausted; and the people lapsed into either indifference or else into such a state of discouragement that the whole undertaking came very near failing entirely;

and had it not been for the earnest exhortations of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, it is probable the rebuilding would not have commenced in the second year of Darius, the son of Hystaspes, if, indeed, it would ever have commenced at all. There were at least three causes which hindered physical progress:

(1) The Persian oppression. This was mainly in the tribute exacted. In other respects the Persian domination was not tyrannical. Still it was a great impediment to national prosperity in very many ways. Liberty is worth a great deal as an inspiration. The Jews were laboring under the disadvantage of conscious national servitude. Nothing breaks the spirit of a people sooner than such a load as the Jews had to carry; and yet this fact has not received the attention it deserves from historians in treating the period now under consideration. It was really next to impossible for the Jewish civilization to rise to a high level during the Persian domination; and this fact at once sharply antagonizes the notion that the period after the Exile was one of considerable literary activity. The people were, for the most part, poor, and apparently there was very little ambition among them to excel in anything that promised physical and intellectual progress.

(2) Another factor entered largely into the general stagnation which characterized the Jews after their return. This was the opposition of the Samaritans. It must be remembered that Samaria was always close at hand, and every movement of the Jews was constantly watched by the Samaritans, who had nothing but enmity for their returned neighbors. It is not difficult to understand how this fact must have operated to hinder the Jews from making any worthy development. The real danger to be feared from the Samaritans was not so great as the annoyance which they caused. They were a source of considerable anxiety, and certainly made the Jewish position anything but a bed of roses.

(3) It must be said, however, that the Jews were themselves greatly to blame for the deplorable state to which they were reduced. While they doubtless learned something during their captivity that was profitable, they brought with them from Babylon many vices. Among these vices may be mentioned the oppression of the poor by the rich. There were a few rich nobles, and from these the poor had to borrow in order to be able to pay tribute and have something upon which to live. The per cent exacted by these money lenders was exorbitant, and, as the poor man often pledged himself as security, he frequently had to surrender himself as a slave in order to meet the debt which he had contracted. The Mosaic law made provision for the release of a debtor at the end of a prescribed period, but during the Captivity the sabbatical year was not observed, and even after the Return it was difficult to reinstate it as it had existed before the Exile. This made the system referred to very oppressive, and it was one of the things that Nehemiah attempted to reform as soon as the wall was completed.

From a religious point of view the condition of the people upon the whole was improved after the Return. It is true, there was much sluggishness, coldness, and even waywardness during the very best days. The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah leave no doubt concerning this matter. The tendency to intermarry with foreigners seemed to be almost irrepressible. This sin invaded even the priesthood, and it was probably this fact which made it necessary on the part of the Divine Father to close the Old Testament Canon with the Prophet Malachi, whose prophecies were almost certainly delivered immediately after the second visit of Nehemiah to Jerusalem. The character of his prophecies exactly suits the state of things which existed when Nehemiah returned, after his year's absence at the Persian court. Evidently the prophet regarded the priesthood as having become thoroughly corrupt. He states that they were offering polluted bread upon the altar. And he declares that the Lord had no longer any pleasure in them, neither would he receive an offering at their hands. Surely it is a remarkable fact that the Old Testament should close with an intimation that the priesthood of the Jewish people could no longer prevail with God, and that the only hope of the nation was in the return to the

law of Moses, and a promise that God would send Elijah, the prophet, before the great and terrible day of reckoning should finally come.

There were, however, at least three decided religious gains which came to the Jews out of their captivity :

(1) They were completely cured of their idolatry. Prior to the Exile this was their besetting sin, and it was for this more than for anything else that they were carried away into captivity. After their return they seemed to have had no more desire to worship strange gods. Their zeal for the true God may not have always been very earnest. It is probable that the religious flame did not often reach a very high point ; indeed it is certain that much of their religious life, even under the inspiring counsels of Ezra and Nehemiah, was not at any time very intense. Nevertheless, even when at the lowest tide, there was no return to idolatry. No doubt the people had seen enough idolatry in Babylonia to satisfy them. There they beheld it in its most disgusting forms, and while in some instances they practiced it during the Captivity, they were undoubtedly decided monotheists ever after the Return.

This fact has a curious significance when reviewed in connection with the rejection of Christ by the Jews. They had no patience at all with any kind of polytheism after the days of the Exile ; and when Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be the Son of God and, therefore, worthy of worship, the Jews at once regarded this claim as equivalent to a species of polytheism, and nothing of this kind was tolerable after the days of the Captivity. Misunderstanding the true character of our Divine Lord, all the later traditions of the Jews compelled them to reject his claim, for they could not consistently allow anyone to share the honors which they regarded as belonging exclusively to Jehovah.

(2) There was at least a partial return to the sanctions of the law of the Lord. During the Captivity, sacrifice and three great sacrificial feasts, namely, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles were discontinued, though the three feasts were commanded to be celebrated in the one place where the Lord "placed his name." The removal to a foreign country made it necessary to end the sabbatical year and such laws as related to it, as well as the feasts just mentioned. It was, therefore, the aim of Ezra and Nehemiah to reëstablish, as soon as possible, what had so long been neglected ; and it was a great triumph for these reformers when they succeeded in getting the people to accept again the law of the Lord as the rule of their lives. And, in view of recent discussions, it is worthy of remark that the law to which Ezra called the attention of the people was a law which, at that time, was *written*. We are told that Zerubbabel "builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, *as it is written in the law of Moses*, the man of God."¹ Again, we are told that "they kept the Feast of Tabernacles, *as it is written*, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required." Surely this is a reference to Numbers xxviii, 11-15. It is furthermore stated that "they set the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their courses for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem, *as it is written in the Book of Moses*." This is an allusion to Numbers viii, 9-15. From these statements the proof is conclusive that, in the days of Ezra, there was in existence what was called the "law of Moses" or "the Book of Moses," and that this *was written* so that it could be referred to and quoted from whenever it was necessary to do so.

In this connection it may be well to mention that even Ezekiel was well acquainted with the Levitical legislation, and must have regarded the Book of Deuteronomy as a part of the Pentateuch in his day. In food, he clearly discriminated between that which was defiled, or ceremonially unclean, and that which he had a right, by the law, to eat. And this being true, a late origin of the Pentateuch is inconceivable. In fact, a careful study of the Prophets and the later Jewish writings makes it practically impossible to deny the existence of the *written law of*

¹ Ezra iii, 2.

Moses in a book during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. This book was no doubt edited at the time the Old Testament Canon was completed, but only such additions were made as were necessary to complete the historical parts. Ezra and Nehemiah added nothing to the law itself. They were not lawmakers, but executors of the law. The people were law breakers, and the two reformers aimed to reestablish the law as the rule of individual and national life. Their position was very much the same as that of a religious reformer of the present day, who seeks to restore the primitive Gospel in its purity and simplicity. He has no new Gospel to introduce, but the old Gospel as it was preached by the apostles of Jesus Christ. He has no new commandments to enforce, but the old commandments of our Lord and his apostles. He has no new church to establish, but he aims to reproduce, as far as is possible in the new conditions of society, the old church which had its beginning at Jerusalem and its further development during the apostolic age.

Ezra and Nehemiah were zealous for the law, and their reformation consisted mainly in emphasizing its importance, and securing obedience to it. Some have thought that there was too much rigidity in their contention and that a few of their requirements were illiberal in the extreme. But it must be remembered that the whole Jewish system was pivoted on the law, and that any failure with respect to its sanctions could not be otherwise than disastrous. Such a failure was like moving the center of gravity from the whole political, moral, and religious sphere, the result of which could only end in complete confusion and national ruin. Even the enforcement of the law, with respect to the prohibition of marriage with foreigners, was a necessity in view of the importance of keeping the Jews a separate people. This separation was essential to the fulfillment of the Messianic redemption. The Coming One, or the *Yavah* of the Old Testament, was identified by the prophets with the tribe of Judah, and it was, therefore, a part of the divine purpose that this tribe, at least, should be preserved in its integrity until Shiloh had come. There was nothing, therefore, in either the government of Ezra or of Nehemiah which was not in harmony with the providential scheme which God was working out through the Jewish people.

(3) The Captivity restored to the Jewish community something of the ancient religious prominence of the Jewish system. It has been remarked that the priesthood came distinctly into power soon after the Return. During the fifty silent years, to which attention was called in a previous chapter, there can be no doubt about the fact that the priests and Levites came to be regarded as important factors in the new Jewish community; and while these finally fell into the disfavor of both Nehemiah and Malachi, there is abundant evidence that the people still largely followed them as their authorized spiritual leaders. Undoubtedly they came to be leaders in almost every respect. Their influence was subsequently somewhat abridged by the rise of the Sopherim, or scribes, a class which ultimately became very powerful in all the affairs of the Jewish people. But during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah the priests and Levites represented the religious aspirations of the Jews. It must be confessed that these aspirations failed to realize the high ideal of the Mosaic law, but it is probable that the law never was fully realized in the life of the people. This is one of the reasons why a Divine Deliverer was necessary. The Apostle Paul tells us that "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." From this it would seem that, on account of the weakness of the flesh, the fulfillment of the requirements of the law by the Jews was practically an impossibility, and that its fulfillment was reserved for us who "walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit"; and, furthermore, that it can be fulfilled in us only because God's Son has "condemned sin in the flesh," and through "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" has made us "free from the law of sin and death."

Hence, notwithstanding the repeated failures of the Jews to keep the law of Moses, it is nevertheless true that the community became a much more distinctly religious organization than it was at any time during the period of the kingdom. The latter was practically a parenthesis in Jewish history. It had no proper place in the Mosaic economy ; and, consequently, the new community was, in its organization, decidedly more primitive than was the kingdom. However, the realization of the high ideal was not reached at any time during the whole period of Jewish history. The prophets had called the people to a truly higher spiritual life. These flaming teachers emphasized righteousness as of much more value than ceremonial exactitude. But, after all, they regarded the letter of the law as expressive of what that righteousness should be. It was the faulty inner life more than the outward observance that the prophets condemned.

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah contain no specific reference to the Messianic hope of the Jewish nation. Evidently the work of the two great reformers was confined to the immediate necessity of the Jewish people. Under their potent influence we see a gradual return to the old order of things which existed prior to the establishment of the kingdom. The chief place among the people passes from the son of David to the high priest. Prophecy begins to give place to the absolute reign of the written law, while the influence of the scribe is clearly seen dawning upon the race. The story of Ezra and Nehemiah marks practically a new period in the history of the Jews. Legislation takes the place of the monarchy, and the sovereignty of the law rules everywhere among the Jews, whether in Babylon, Judea, Egypt, or in any other lands. Judaism is no longer confined to Palestine, but soon becomes a power in many other parts of the world ; and wherever it goes it takes its governor with it, namely, the written law.

It is pleasing, however, to know that the final word of revelation, through Malachi, represents Jehovah, first, as a loving father and ruler of this people, second, as the supreme God and Father of all, and third, as their righteous and final Judge ; and, as Malachi clearly indicates, the coming of John the Baptist, as well as the rising of the "Son of righteousness with healing in his wings," his last words practically bridge over the four hundred silent years (which followed the closing of the Old Testament Canon until the coming of the Messiah) with a distinct promise of the new age to which all Jewish history had been but a prelude. The types and shadows all have their fulfillment in Christ.

Yours Truly
W. J. Moore

BOOK X.

FROM THE CLOSE OF THE OLD ERA TO THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW.

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BOOK X.

FROM THE PROPHETICAL ERA TO THE REIGN OF AUGUSTUS.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOOKS CALLED "APOCRYPHA."

WE have come to a period in the history of the Bible which someone has fancifully called the "four silent centuries."

By this phrase it is meant that, between the history in the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament, there is a period estimated as about four hundred years. But, in truth, this period is partly covered, in bold, figurative outline, by the Book of Daniel. And, in the books of the Apocrypha, which are more frequently printed in Bibles published in England than in those published by the American Bible Society, these four hundred years are in a great measure covered. A short account of the books of the Apocrypha will be found farther on in this chapter. These centuries are not silent in any other sense than that their history scarcely comes into the Old Testament or the New. They are centuries crowded with movements, of which the history is well known, and which is of the first importance to Israel and to the world. For we have now come to a period when Israel, which has been separated from all the world, is to become the point of union of all races. We have seen an Israel, thus far, whose prophets have generally deprecated all connection with outside nations. They have taught that Israel is a peculiar people, holding special relations with the supreme God. But when we begin to read our New Testament, we find that Herod, who is king of the Jews, is but the ruler appointed by the Roman empire, mistress of all the nations of the West. We find Palestine, more than ever the Holy Land, traversed by caravans, which belong to a system of trade uniting Asia, Africa, and Europe. We find this land studded with Greek cities, bearing Greek names. The Salem of Melchisedek, the Zion of David, has received the Greek name Hierosolyma, which we call Jerusalem. We find Jesus of Nazareth speaking Greek familiarly, perhaps as his accustomed language.¹

We find Jewish merchants and bankers, and colonies of other Jews, in all the important cities of the busy western world. These men, by the time of Christ, had established synagogues in most of those cities. From those synagogues yearly offerings to Jerusalem flow dutifully up regularly to the temple. And the Jerusalem, which in David's time was a fortress which defied him for years, the Jerusalem which in later years shook off so many attacks from the East and from the South, is now a place where men gather from every section of the world as it is known in the geography of their day. Here are Medes, and Elamites, and Persians—men, indeed, from almost every country in Asia; here are Egyptians, and Lybians, and Cyrenians, and who shall say how many representatives from Africa?—here are Greeks and Romans from

¹ Dr. Alexander Roberts, professor in the University of St. Andrews, has treated this subject fully in his book, "Greek the Language of Christ and His Apostles," London, 1888, 8vo. "The one great literary labor of his life has been," he tells us, "to convince the world that Greek was the language habitually made use of by Christ in his public teaching."

Europe. When our Lord is crucified, at the instance of Asiatic priests, a file of European soldiers is ordered to do their bidding, and an African bears the cross on which he is to die. The craft of Asia, the strength of Europe, and the submission of Africa appear together in the moment which is the crisis of the salvation of the world.

In the following chapters we are to trace the steps of the history which opened Israel to all mankind. And these four centuries, in the larger sense, are not silent. There are records, not so full as we could wish, but not insufficient, from which we can trace their unfolding, of which the results are remarkable.

Dr. Stanley, the distinguished Dean of Westminster, has called attention to the renewal, by which all the religious systems of all the world were awakened in the period which marked the return of the Jewish leaders from captivity. Confucius, to this hour the greatest leader of Chinese thought, could have met and talked with Ezra, who reduced the Jewish Scriptures and system to their present form. The religion of Zoroaster, which was the religion of Cyrus, received its last important development in the same century. Socrates, with whom originated the idealism of Greece, as we know Greek thought, was born in the year 470 B. C. That is, it seems probable that Socrates, who was the contemporary of the prophet Malachi, was born before Confucius died. It thus appears that the century which witnessed the establishment of Judea as a province of the empire of Cyrus, was a century of critical importance in the religious development of all the great systems of the world's faith.

There is no immediate connection between the work, in India, of Sakya Muni or "Buddha," with the religious systems which have been referred to. But, considering the importance which his life has since held in the history of mankind, we must recollect that this life also comes into the century which we are now studying. In the recent enthusiasm of western scholars for the study of Buddhism every effort has been made to show that the system of Buddha very early affected the thought of Palestine and of Greece. Very little has been really achieved by this effort. Perhaps the most interesting suggestion which it has made is in the inquiry whether the Apostle Nathanael had not played with Buddhism, and whether the Savior did not refer to this when he said to Nathanael, "I saw thee under the fig tree." Some have supposed that he here made a reference to the Bodhi, the *Ficus religiosa*, which is the symbol of Buddhism, somewhat as the cross is the symbol of Christianity.

There seems very little probability that Buddhism had worked its way to the West in the four centuries under our view. But there is no doubt that the religious philosophy of Socrates and his pupils affected the life of all the people, Jews or Gentiles, with whom the Savior and newborn Christianity had to do. Socrates was a pure theist, who believed in one unseen Spirit as the Ruler of mankind. He would have been more than delighted had any good fortune brought to him any one of the noblest psalms of David. His religion, and that of Plato, who records it, are so purely spiritual that the early Christian fathers constantly call them "Christians before Christ," and try to show, what cannot be shown, that they had read the Hebrew prophecies of the Messiah. Such was the greatest religious teacher of Europe, whose religious philosophy was working in the Greek and Egyptian mind all through the period which separates the Old Testament from the New. Socrates died in the year 399 B. C. Malachi, as has been said, was his contemporary. The first real impression which can now be traced in the literature of Greece and Rome as the result of the increasing intimacy of Israel with the West is to be found in the Sibylline books. Such references to prophecies in the Old Testament as were thus brought into western literature, are familiar even to schoolboys in Virgil's well-known poem to Pollio:

"The son shall lead the life of gods, and be
By gods and heroes seen, and gods and heroes see.
The jarring nations he in peace shall bind,

And with paternal virtues rule mankind,
 The goats with strutting dugs shall homeward speed,
 And lowing herds, secure from lions, feed.
 His cradle shall with rising flowers be crowned;
 The serpent's brood shall die; the sacred ground
 Shall weeds and poisonous plants refuse to bear;
 Each common bush shall Syrian roses wear.
 But when heroic verse his youth shall raise,
 And form it to hereditary praise,
 Unlabored harvests shall the fields adorn,
 And clustered grapes shall blush on every thorn;
 The knotted oaks shall showers of honey weep,
 And through the matted grass the liquid gold shall creep."

It is generally supposed that the religious leader now known as Zoroaster, or Zarathustra, had proclaimed his simple and pure religion fifteen centuries before. At Baktra, "the glorious," now called Balkh, the "Mother of Cities," "he summons the princes to draw nigh and to choose between faith and superstition." Of the religion of Zoroaster the fundamental article was the identification of Truth with the Supreme Being. Of the education of the Persian youth, it was said that they were taught to speak the truth, and that here was the central law of life. From reasons which need not be here examined, this old faith of Zoroaster had just at this time been newly awakened. The influence of its revival appears in all the life of Cyrus, and in the history of the Persian dynasty afterward. Of the fundamental doctrine that truth is the God of the universe, the reader will find an illustration in the story of Zerubbabel and his speech to King Darius. "Is he not great that maketh these things? Therefore great is the truth, and stronger than all things. All the earth calleth upon the truth, and the heaven blesseth it. . . . As for the truth, it endureth, and is always strong: it liveth and conquereth forevermore. . . . Blessed be the God of truth . . . And all the people then shouted and said, Great is truth, and mighty above all things."¹

The reader must remember that, for more than a hundred years after the reëstablishment of the temple, Judea was only an outlying province of the Persian monarchy. In Jerusalem itself the Persian viceroy lived in a palace close by the temple built by Ezra and Nehemiah. His relation to the religious and social life of the Jews was quite as close as that, with which we are more familiar, between Roman governors like Pilate and the Jewish leaders in later times.

After the notices which we have of the celebration of the completion of the temple comes a real period of silence. For seventy years we have but little detail of the history of the newly established city, or of the land of which it was the nominal capital. We have the names of the high priests in which the line was continued from Joshua, the son of Josedek. It would seem, however, that a certain prosperity began to establish itself in the city, although it was still but thinly inhabited. The Jewish tradition, as it appears in the somewhat unreliable authority of the Talmud, makes Zerubbabel go back to Babylon to die. The English reader should remember that the name Zerubbabel means "He who has left Babel behind him." To us in America there is a certain quaint interest in the remembrance that when the great English preacher, George Phillips, crossed to Massachusetts in 1630, and a baby was born to him, he christened the little child by the name of Zerubbabel, because he wished to imply that he had left the Babel of controversy on the other side of the desert of waters.

After seventy years, however, the arrival of Ezra, to be followed soon after by the arrival of Nehemiah, gives that new life to Jerusalem of which the outside details are recorded in the books which bear their names. In the book to which the name of First Esdras is given, in the Apocrypha, some further detail, but nothing of great importance, will be found.

¹ I. Esdras iv, 33-41.

Meanwhile, the condition of things in the eastern empire is changing. The history recorded in the Book of Esther connects the sacred historians with those of Greece. The Ahasuerus of the Bible is the Xerxes of Herodotus. The Book of Esther is contained in all the Bibles; some chapters are added in the Apocrypha, with the general statement that they are the remainder of the Book of Esther. These chapters relate largely to the Feast of Purim, a feast still celebrated with enthusiasm among the Hebrews in all parts of the world. They contain details which fill in, with an exaggerated enthusiasm, the details of the simpler narrative in the earlier book. The critical students do not believe that these traditions have any real authority in history. The death of Xerxes is fixed, from the authority of Herodotus, as in the year 465 B. C.

The age of Malachi, the last of the prophets, may be roughly stated as extending from 480 to 400 B. C. Seventy years after the latest of these periods, the young Alexander, in the flush of power, marched on his great campaign which was to change the face of the world. These seventy years, like the period of similar length before the work of Ezra and Nehemiah, seem to have made for Israel one of those periods of happy history of which it has been said that their annals are not written, or, if written, are not preserved. A Persian governor still lived in the city of Jerusalem, but such government as was administered was probably administered by the priesthood, well-nigh all-powerful. The jealousy between the North and the South, which had so long broken Israel asunder, had asserted itself again. Traces of it appear in all the history of the centuries which follow; but in the succession of one high priest after another, and in the other scanty annals of two generations, there is but little interest, excepting as it prepares the field for the more eventful centuries which follow.

According to the brief record of Josephus, who passes over this history in a few words, four high priests succeeded each his father, in regular hereditary succession. Johanan, the third of these, is recorded as slaying his own brother Joshua in the temple. For this murder the general of the Persian army "punished the Jews for seven years." Such is the brief phrase of the historian, who gives no account of what the punishment was. At this time, according to their history, the temple on Mount Gerizim was built by Sanballat, who had been sent by Darius into Samaria. With the arrival of Alexander the Great and his conquering army in Asia, this period of comparative peace, which has left so short a record, ends.

The Apocrypha, as most people know, once formed an integral part of the English Bible, and was read and prized in the time of the Puritans as second only in worth to the canonical books. Perhaps the commonest impression to-day is that the Apocrypha is a collection of writings of little value, if not positively injurious. The very name has an unpleasant sound, for its original meaning, "hidden writings," has been replaced by the opprobrious one of "spurious scriptures," and a bad name is rarely a good introduction.

The word "Apocrypha" has passed through three stages. First, it was a title of praise bestowed by the Gnostics on their books of "hidden wisdom." Then it was a term of reproach given by the early Christians to the spurious gospels and other writings regarded as uninspired, expressly for the purpose of placing them in the same category as the Gnostic scriptures, which were rejected as being both unorthodox and mischievous. Afterward it was used to denote all the books believed to be uninspired and unworthy of a place in the Canon. Now, after centuries of misconception and unjust neglect, the real character and use of the Apocrypha are becoming more widely known. We are not concerned now, as the Roman Catholics once were, to prove that nearly the whole collection should be regarded as inspired, and hence of supreme authority; but we maintain, that if all precious truth concerning God and man is divinely given, we are compelled to believe that the sublime and spiritual passages in the Apocrypha were written and have been preserved through the grace of him "from whom cometh every good and perfect gift."

As there is a widespread prejudice against these writings, it may be of service to state a few of the reasons for studying them.

All history, whether of national growth and decline or of the development of moral and religious conceptions, is of great value. In fact, we cannot understand the men around us to-day unless we patiently read and consider the records of the past. Much of the Apocrypha is certainly not reliable history. Some of it is evidently fictitious, and in some books tame platitudes and feeble puerilities abound. Nevertheless, as the most precious metals are often found sparsely scattered amid masses of rubbish, so among these uncanonical books we may discover grains of fine gold. The real use of the Apocrypha will not be understood and appreciated unless it is regarded from the proper standpoint. When looked at as the bridge between two periods of history otherwise hopelessly sundered, we at once discover its true value. It is the connecting link in the records of an intensely interesting people, and thus affords us that sense of continuity and completeness which we all need and prize so much. It is not too much to say that our conception of the orderly growth and development of the Hebrew religion would be much less satisfactory than it is were it not for the existence of the Apocrypha.

To the student of Jewish history the value of the Apocrypha is great, for some of its books, — *e. g.*, the Books of Maccabees — afford us invaluable information about obscure periods not described elsewhere. No one can obtain an accurate and comprehensive idea either of the time “between the books” of the Old and New Testaments or of the conditions of life in Palestine, while Jesus trod her streets, and lanes, and holy fields, unless he is willing to study the much depreciated, but exceedingly useful, Apocrypha. No one can understand the orderly growth of religious doctrines — such as the doctrine of the immortality of the soul — without studying its pages. We may also find many passages which throw light on the apocalyptic symbolism, the figurative language and parabolic teaching of the Old and New Testaments.

In the New Testament, especially in John’s Gospel, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in the writings of Peter, Paul, and James, we find allusions to sayings in the Apocryphal books. There are also many instances of affinity of thought which can only be explained on the ground that Jesus and his apostles were well acquainted with the Apocrypha. Can there be a more interesting branch of study to Christians than that of the literature once read by Jesus and his disciples? Doubtless these writings influenced the thought and language of the disciples, and it should be a pleasant as well as a profitable task to trace the evidences that Jesus had “searched” these scriptures and found in them some of the elements which assisted his “growth in wisdom,” to which Luke refers in the fifty-second verse of his second chapter. Doubtless he read them, and it is not improbable that he made use of them in his teaching, for nothing that related to Israel’s past would be despised by him.

Those who love to study prophecy ought to give the most careful attention to the symbols used in the Apocryphal books, if they would gain a correct understanding of the Old Testament prophets. The same remark applies to many difficult passages in the New Testament, notably to the peculiar symbolism of the Book of Revelation. Dean Stanley says of the “Wisdom of Solomon” and “Ecclesiasticus”: “They both furnish the links which connect the earlier Hebrew literature with that final outburst of religious teaching which is recorded in the gospels and epistles. The parables and discourses beside the Galilean lake, the epistles of James, of John, and of the unknown author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, have hardly any affinity with the style of Daniel or Malachi, of Tobit or of the rabbinical school, but they are the direct continuation, although in a more exalted form, of the two Apocryphical Books of Wisdom.”

For these reasons, among others, we are constrained to acknowledge the great value of a careful study of these books, and to urge those who have neglected or grown tired of them to turn to them once again to see whether they may not, like Bunyan and Baxter, find “edification” and “comfort” therein. A brief account of the different writings composing this

"intermediary" collection of ancient literature will be of service to those who would enter on the study of them.

The three questions most often asked in regard to any book are these: "By whom was it written? When was it written? Why was it written?"—thus showing that, after all, critics and ordinary people are very much alike.

First in order, though not in date, is the First Book of Esdras. Its date is unknown, but as it was written in Greek, it must belong to a time subsequent to Alexander the Great, probably about 100 B. C. It was used by Josephus as of equal authority with the canonical scriptures of his day. The author is unknown, but was probably an Alexandrian Jew who "wished to preserve and hand down to posterity a tradition concerning the mission of Zerubabel from the Persian court, to act as the prince of the returning captives to Jerusalem and the chief promoter of the rebuilding of the city and temple." The account given of this, however, is in some parts quite inconsistent with the records of the Old Testament; but the book contains many wise sentences, among others, as we have seen, the oft-quoted, "Great is truth, and mighty above all things."

The Second Book of Esdras was probably compiled by several writers, Jewish and Christian, between 25 B. C. and 260 A. D. It contains much that is noble and sublime, and, apart from the more apocryphal and legendary portions, might seem to deserve more attention than it has received from either early or late Christian authors and theologians. The inquiries into the great problems of human existence, the extensive propagation of moral evil, and the fewness of those who escape from it, are questions of much wider interest than many which have exercised the minds of theologians, and can by no means be regarded as the mere dreams of a recluse. At the same time, the contemplative life, such as was chosen by the early ascetics of Egypt, would be expected to give birth to such inquiries and speculations. When Judaism and Christianity were confronted by Pagan culture and philosophy, religious belief in the one God and Creator of all would naturally take an apologetic form in order to meet the obvious objection that he, of whom the creation of the world was asserted, and from whom all souls proceed, should have restricted his revelation to so small a portion of mankind. Hence, the perplexing thought arises that "the Most High hath made this world [or age] for many, but the world to come for few" (chapter viii, 1). The reply, in chapter viii, 47, "Thou comest far short, that thou shouldst be able to love my creature more than I"; or in chapter v, 33, "Lovest thou that people better than he that made them?" leaves the problem unsolved. Man is required to acquiesce in his ignorance of God's ways until the time of a fuller revelation shall arrive. In these visions the Apocalypse of Esdras has points of contact with Wisdom xi and xii, and with the teaching of the Epistle to the Romans on the relations of Jews and heathen to the one God of all.

Next in order comes the Book of Tobit, which Ewald thinks was composed in the far East toward the end of the Persian period, about 350 B. C. The author is not certainly known, but the advice of the good father Tobit to the good son Tobias is the very counterpart of that which a Jewish teacher of later days, addressing "the twelve tribes scattered abroad," described as "pure and undefiled religion."¹

Churton says: "The Book of Tobit must be regarded rather as a moral and instructive treatise, than as an accurate record of historical facts." It inculcates constant trust in the divine providence overruling all things for good to the upright and devout. It is also an "important Jewish testimony to the sanctity of marriage and to monogamy as the original divine institution. In this respect it affords a remarkable contrast to the corrupt and degenerate Judaism which permitted 'divorce for any cause,' thus departing from the teaching of the Prophet Malachi." By its sanction of prayers for the dead, it shows that some of the Jews

¹ James i, 27.



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of that period did not believe that at death man departs "straight to heaven or hell fixed in that state wherein he dies"; though the texts quoted from it certainly furnish slender enough support for the purgatorial institution of the Roman Church.

The intent of the writer was undoubtedly good, but the lessons he had to inculcate are almost buried beneath angel and demon stories of a most grotesque and superstitious character. Yet we must thank him for some most excellent teaching, especially for saying "God is our Father."¹

The Book of Judith was probably written about 160 B. C., by one who wished to arouse a patriotic spirit among the women of his country. Luther thought it was a "good, holy, and useful book," etc., a statement which ought to make us grateful that our idea of "good, holy, and useful books" is somewhat different from that of his day. It is undoubtedly a wholly fictitious narrative, the "first unquestionable example of a religious romance. It is the story of Jael reënacted in the midst of the pomp and luxury of Persia or Syria, and is said to have nerved the hand of Charlotte Corday against Marat. It was the last direct expression of the fierce spirit of the older Judaism."² It is a picture of a fanatical woman who, to save her people, risks her virtue and life in the attempt to destroy their fanatical foes. The days are gone by for such actions and such stories, and we need not regret it.

After Judith we come to "The Rest of the Chapters of the Book of Esther, which are found neither in the Hebrew nor the Chaldee." Very little loss would have been sustained if these chapters had never been found anywhere. The writer was probably a Jew residing in Egypt about 180 B. C. He appears to have aimed to show that the deliverance of the Jews recorded in the canonical Book of Esther was a special interposition of divine providence in answer to prayer. Also, he wished to "vindicate the character of Esther, who, though a daughter of Israel, had been willing to become the consort or concubine of a heathen prince." It is not regarded by scholars as having any historical value, but Clement of Rome referred to it as containing an edifying example of the value of prayer, fasting, and humiliation.

Next in order comes "The Wisdom of Solomon," one of the most valuable books in the whole of the Apocryphal writings. Grotius suggested that it was compiled from traditional sayings of Solomon; others have attributed it to the gifted Alexandrian Jew, Philo; but neither of these theories can be maintained. In all probability the book was written by a learned and devout Jew of Alexandria, not earlier than 160 B. C. He was evidently well versed both in the Hebrew Scripture and in the philosophy of Plato. "He was one of the earlier of those Jewish teachers who sought the aid of Greek learning and culture, in order to bring out with greater fullness the hidden meaning of the Law and the Prophets." One writer has called this book "an excellent and most elegant paraphrase upon many canonical Scriptures, containing many excellent expressions of God's special providence and infinite wisdom in governing the world, and in overruling both the policy and the power of the greatest princes."

The author wished to uphold the purity and excellence of his religion against those who attacked or disparaged it. Even at this early date the Grecian philosophers and others had denounced the fierce exterminatory wars of the Israelites. They maintained that God had not shown impartiality in his dealings with mankind. These points the writer of the "Wisdom" endeavored to meet. He pleaded that God had shown care and made provision for all men. Truth was never withheld from any who had sought it; moreover, God had often revealed himself to those who sought him not. Wisdom is communicated liberally, and God, from whom wisdom proceeds, is a "lover of the souls of men." True, Israel had been chosen as the Lord's firstborn; not, however, to exclusively possess the divine law, but as a means to impart it to the whole world.

¹ Tobit xiii, 4.

² Stanley.

Idolatry is fully and vigorously denounced as not only a foolish superstition, but as sinful and injurious to man's welfare.

The immortality of the soul is strictly maintained and the future glory and happiness of the righteous are described in glowing language. Man's soul is lent to him, and at death required again by the Great Owner of all. The author has much resembling the teaching of Plato. "Let our strength be the law of justice," has been compared with similar language in Plato's "Republic." "The conception of wisdom in chapter vii, 17, is Platonic, especially as embracing all kinds of science, the 'knowledge of things that are.' Wisdom, being an 'influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty,' answers exactly to the Platonic idea of the divine mind or reason. In chapter viii, 7, the four cardinal virtues of temperance, prudence, justice, and fortitude are evidently derived from the same source.¹ In these and other instances the author shows an anxiety to find points of contact between the Hebrew religion and Platonism."

Dean Stanley, who was an enthusiastic admirer of the "Wisdom," says: "It is the expression of an Alexandrian sage presenting his Grecian ideas under the forms of Jewish history. We feel with him the oppressive atmosphere of the elaborate Egyptian idolatry. We see through his eyes the ships passing along the Mediterranean waters into the Alexandrian harbor. We recognize the rhetoric of the Grecian sophists in the Ptolemean court; we are present at the luxurious banquets and lax discussions of the neighboring philosophers of Cyrene.² But in the midst of this Gentile scenery there is a voice which speaks with the authority of the ancient prophets to this new world. The book is a signal instance of the custom prevalent in the two centuries before the Christian era, both in the Jewish and Gentile world, of placing modern untried writings under the shelter of some venerable authority. No name appeared for this purpose so mighty as that of the great master of the wisdom of Israel. Solomon is evoked from the dead to address the rulers of mankind. 'Love righteousness, ye that are judges of the earth. Hear, therefore, O ye kings, and understand; for your power is given unto you of the Lord, and your dominion from the Most High, who shall try your works and search out your counsels. Being ministers of his kingdom, ye have not judged aright, nor kept the law, nor walked after the counsel of God.'³ It is the first strong expression uttered with the combined force of Greek freedom and Hebrew solemnity, not of the divine right, but of the divine duty of kings; and it might well be provoked by the spectacle of the corrupt rulers, whether of the Egyptian or Syrian dynasties. The importance of wisdom and the value of justice had often been set forth before, both by Jew and Greek. But there is a wider and more tender grasp of the whole complex relation of the intellectual and moral excellence, and, therefore, of the whole ideal of true religion, in the indications which this book contains of the universal workings of the divine mind in the heart of man."⁴

"In one special quarter of the religious horizon there is a revelation which this unknown author is the first to proclaim, with the authority of firm conviction and deep insight, whether to the Gentile or the Jew, namely, the revelation of 'the hope of immortality,' the immortality of righteousness."⁵

"In the Psalmists and Prophets there had been bright anticipations of such a hope, inseparable from their unfailing assurance of the power and goodness of the Eternal. But it had never taken the form of a positive, distinct assertion. In the Grecian world a vast step forward was taken in the Platonic representations of the last teachings of Socrates. The seed thus sown by the doctrine of Athenian philosophy fell on the deep soil of a Hebrew faith, struck root downward to a depth from which it has never since been eradicated, and bore fruit upward, which has sustained the moral life of Christendom to this hour. Nor is it only the force and

¹ Aristotle.

² Wisdom vi, 9-12.

³ Wisdom vi, 1-4.

⁴ Compare Wisdom i, 7, ii, 16-18, vi, 17, 18, vii, 22-27, xi, 26.

⁵ Wisdom i, 15; iii, 4.

pathos with which this truth of a future existence is urged, but the grounds on which it is based, that fill the soul and intensify the teaching of this Jewish Phædo. It is founded on these two convictions, which, alike to the most philosophic and the most simple minds, still seem the most cogent — the imperfection of a good man's existence if limited to this present life; and the firm grasp of the divine perfections. 'The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God. In the sight of the unwise they seem to die; but they are in peace.' 'He being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time.' 'God created man to be immortal, and made him an image of his own eternity. To know God is perfect righteousness. To know his power is the root of immortality.'"¹

This book has been dealt with at greater length than the others, because with Ecclesiasticus it "towers" far above them and has ever been held in great esteem even by those who disparage the rest of the Apocrypha. It is the "recommendation of the theology of Alexandria to Palestine," just as Ecclesiasticus is the "recommendation of the theology of Palestine to Alexandria." To those who doubt the possibility of conveying the religious thought of a nation to one radically different, these two books are specially commended. Greek religious thought *was* received by the Jews, and Hebrew religious thought *was* assimilated by the Greeks, to the lasting advantage of both peoples and the whole world.

Ecclesiasticus, or as its original title runs, "The Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach," was "The Church Book," the "Whole Duty of Man," "The Imitation," of the Jews of Alexandria and afterward of the early Christians. The author, Jesus the son of Sirach, probably wrote it about 235 B. C. He was one of the earliest and best Biblical students. After prolonged and earnest study, he felt that he had learned much of value to himself and mankind generally. This led him to write his book and the same motive prompted his grandson some fifty years later — 185 B. C. — to translate it from Hebrew into Greek. "It was a noble ambition, alike of the grandfather and the grandson, to carry into the most minute duties of daily life the principles of their ancient law — 'laboring not for himself only, but for all who seek learning.' It is, perhaps, the only one of the Apocryphal books composed originally not in Greek, but in Hebrew; and the translator well knew the difficulty of rendering the peculiarities of his native tongue into the fluent language of Alexandria. It is the first reflection which we possess on the Old Testament Scriptures after the commencement of the formation of the Canon. And if not the largest book in the whole Bible (for the Psalms and possibly the book of Isaiah's prophecies exceed it), yet it is certainly the largest of one single author."²

"Jerusalem is still the center, and Palestine the horizon of his thoughts. The priesthood, with their offerings, their dues, and their stately appearance, are to him the most prominent figures of the Jewish community. Nor is the modern institution of the scribes forgotten. He draws his images of grandeur from the cedars of Lebanon, the fir trees that clothe the sides of Hermon, and from the terebinth with its spreading branches. His images of beauty are taken from the palm trees in the tropical heat of Engedi, or from the roses and lilies and fragrant shade by the well-watered gardens of Jericho. It is, after Malachi, the one specimen of a purely Palestinian treatise during this period."³

"The author, although his birthplace and his home were in Jerusalem, was yet a traveler in foreign lands; he knew the value, even if he had the actual experience of 'serving among great men and before princes,' he had tried the good and evil among men."⁴

"In some respects it falls below the dignity of the ancient writings of Solomon by the homeliness of its details for guidance of behavior, etc. But its general tone is worthy of that first contact between the two great civilizations of the ancient world, and breathes a spirit which an Isaiah would not have condemned. There is not a word in it to countenance the minute casuistries of the later rabbis, or the metaphysical subtleties of the later Alexandrians. It

¹ Wisdom ii, 23, iii, 1, 2, iv, 13, xv, 3.

² Stanley.

³ Stanley.

⁴ Ecclesiasticus xxxix, 4, li, 13.

pours out its whole strength in discussing the conduct of human life, or the direction of the soul to noble aims. 'It is not meet to despise a poor man that hath understanding, neither is it convenient to magnify a sinful man. Great men, and judges, and potentates shall be honored, yet there is none of them greater than he that feareth the Lord.'¹ 'Strive for the truth unto death, and the Lord shall fight for thee.'²

"There is a tender compassion which reaches far into the future religion of mankind: 'Let it not grieve thee to bow down thine ear to the poor and give him a friendly answer with gentleness.'³ He must have been a delightful teacher who could so write of friendship in all its forms and rise above the harshness of his relations to his slaves."⁴

"The conclusion is, beyond question, original. It is the song of praise,⁵ which, beginning with the glories of the Creation, breaks forth into that 'Hymn of the Forefathers,' as it is called in its ancient title, to which there is no parallel in the Old Testament, but of which the catalogue of the worthies of faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews is an obvious imitation. Here, and here only, is a full expression given to that natural instinct of reverence for the mighty dead, which has in these striking words been heard from generation to generation in the festivals of the great benefactors of Christendom, or when the illustrious of the earth are committed to the grave."⁶

In conclusion, we must call attention to the writer's doctrine that obedience to the moral law is far better than material sacrifices and ritual services.⁷ Forgiveness of injuries is affirmed to be the condition of obtaining mercy from the Lord.⁸ It is true that we find elements of "wood, hay, and stubble," but the gold and silver prevail, for, though there are maxims "commending worldly prudence or even subtlety," yet most of the moral sayings are based on the higher wisdom of the fear of God. In common with the "Wisdom of Solomon," the book insists on the duty of imparting to others the treasures of knowledge which have been gained by prayer, study, and divine aid, thus inculcating the generous use of what has been so liberally given by God and anticipating the beautiful, sweet reasonableness of the words of Jesus, "Freely ye have received, freely give."

The so-called "Additions to the Books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Lamentations" are not in the English Bible of 1611 with the other Apocryphal books, but Churton includes them in his work. They consist of a few brief fragments, with no sufficient evidence of their genuineness. Nearly, if not quite all the useful words in them can be found in our canonical Scriptures, and the rest are of no account whatever.

The "Book of Baruch" was probably not all written at one time; some portions may be as early as 350 B. C., while some are almost certainly as late as 100 B. C. — possibly even later. How much, if any of it, was derived from the writings of Baruch is not known. It contains two parts, the Epistle of Baruch the Scribe, which was evidently intended by the compiler "to encourage the Jews in a time of national trouble and perplexity, by leading them to reflect on the past glory of the Law, and the yet greater glory of the sayings of the prophets concerning their future." The second part is the "spurious" Epistle of Jeremy, which was probably written in Egypt as a reiteration of the early prophetic warnings against idolatry with the design of confirming the Jews in their adherence to the true religion while they were surrounded by the influences of paganism. As a book of prayer and praise, the Book of Baruch was doubtless suitable for the needs of the time in which it was written, though we find very little of value beyond what we possess in the Old Testament prophets.

Next we come to the "Additions to the Book of Daniel." The first section contains the prayer and "Song of the Three Hebrew Children," which is one of the most beautiful of all the ancient hymns of adoration to God. It has always held an honored place in the leading

¹ Ecclesiasticus x, 22-25.

² Ecclesiasticus iv, 28.

³ Ecclesiasticus iv, 8.

⁴ Stanley.

⁵ Ecclesiasticus xlii, 15, 1.

⁶ Stanley.

⁷ Ecclesiasticus xxxv, 1, etc.

⁸ Ecclesiasticus xxviii, 2-7.

liturgies down to the present day. The second part is the "Story of Susanna," which may have been written, as the conclusion of it in the Septuagint tells us, "to show how, when the elders or *aged* men of Israel had corrupted their ways, God would raise up witnesses to his truth and righteousness amongst their *young* men." It is doubtless the invention of a prurient mind; and even if it was designed to censure faults in the administration of the Sanhedrim, and to inculcate morality, there is every reason to believe it has done much to bring the Apocryphal writings into disrepute, and has suggested more impure thoughts than it has ever restrained. The third part is the history of "Bel and the Dragon," a grotesque fiction intended to expose the impostures of idol worship and to exalt the true religion of the Hebrews. The authors and dates of these "Additions" are unknown.

The "Prayer of Manasses" is probably an attempt by some Jewish teacher to extol the everlasting mercy of God, and to set forth the value of penitence and prayer even to the vilest men. Probably it was written not long before the Christian era. The author is unknown, but the prayer is an eloquent and beautiful expression of deep penitence blended with a strong assurance of obtaining forgiveness.

As the "Wisdom" and "Ecclesiasticus" stand highest of all the Apocryphal writings for their noble moral teaching, so the First Book of Maccabees takes the first place for interesting and reliable history. It was probably written about 125 B. C. Who its author was has not been ascertained, but his book has always been highly valued as giving most important information on a section of history of which comparatively little is known. "The book extends over a period reaching from the death of Alexander the Great to the first year of the pontificate of John Hyrcanus; though it is chiefly the narrative of the events of forty years of Jewish history, from 175 to 135 B. C." Dr. Pusey says: "The First Book of Maccabees is generally allowed to be an accurate record. It is a proof of the antiquity of the work that the simple, unsuspecting trust reposed by Judas Maccabæus in the Roman people is such as would never have been expressed at a later period, when Rome's wider dominion and more extended ambition became the terror of the nations. Besides his admiration of the Roman character, the author shows a minute acquaintance with facts, places, and customs, such as would be expected in one who was nearly contemporary with the matters related." Critics have discovered errors in it, but they appear to be purely accidental as well as unimportant, such as the estimates given of the numbers of the armies, and of the strength of the elephants—new, strange beasts, which doubtless puzzled a Jewish writer to describe accurately. Still the narrative is of a high character and lights up a period of oppression and tyranny with the glory of heroism and devotion to the cause of truth and righteousness.

The Second Book of Maccabees was, in all probability, written by an Alexandrian Jew about 80 B. C. The object of the writer is to give an account of the circumstances under which Judas Maccabæus began his victorious campaign against the Syrians and accomplished so much toward securing the independence of his people. It contains many errors, but its author plainly avows that his aim was not so much to write an exact history as to inculcate lessons of devotion, patriotism, and piety. The style is inflated and the taste very poor, yet the value of the book is considerable, because for the four or five years preceding the commencement of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes—180 to 175 B. C.—it is our sole authority.¹ It is also valuable as giving a much more full and exact account of the events of the years from 176 to 166 B. C. than is given in the First Book of Maccabees.

Evidently the writer was a pious and God-fearing man whose sympathies were entirely with the orthodox Pharisaic party who wished to keep to the old traditions and avoid all Gentile innovations. He desired to promote a more strict observance of the Jewish festivals by his countrymen in Egypt and to strengthen their reverence for the temple services in Jerusalem.

¹ II. Maccabees iii, iv, 6.

He had a strong conviction that all things are under the rule of divine providence; hence he urges absolute obedience to the law and unshaken trust in God's protective care over all his saints. If he allows them to be afflicted, it is only to purify and discipline them. Even if they suffer death, it is still for the best, since they will surely be rewarded at the resurrection of the just.

Thus ends the Apocrypha as given in the English Bible of 1611, but in Churton's Apocrypha, the Third and Fourth Books of Maccabees are included. These are much inferior to the two we have described. It should be mentioned, however, that the Third Book of Maccabees contains many noble sentiments, and that the Fourth is remarkable for its strong expressions of faith in the reality of future rewards and punishments, and the contrast between things temporal and things eternal. Hence, though of much less value than the First and Second Maccabees, they are yet quite worthy of a place in the Maccabean literature.

There are other ancient writings sometimes called Apocryphal, and sometimes "spurious" Scriptures, of which we can here give only the briefest account.

The Fifth Book of Maccabees is at present little known. It is thought to have been compiled by a Jew, and purports to be a history of his people from 186 B. C. to 6 B. C. If it had been a plain, independent account it would have been most useful, but it is simply a reproduction in a less trustworthy form of what may be found in all its essential features in the Maccabean books and Josephus. Its religious teaching is similar to that in First and Second Maccabees, though a development is observed in its statement of the doctrine of the future state. The authorship is not known; it may have been written as late as 70 A. D.

The Book of Enoch, probably written before 160 B. C., was the work of a Palestinian Jew. It has attracted attention because of the quotation from it found in the Epistle of Jude; but it is mainly composed of records of grotesque visions. An account of it will be given in another chapter.

The "Psalter of Solomon"—which does not claim to have been written by him—was most likely composed about 63 B. C. It does not possess many important features, except the resemblance between some of its passages and certain parts of the gospels, which has led some scholars to think it was one of the books read by Jesus in his home at Nazareth. It is the first book in which the word "Messiah" is used.

The "Apocalypse of Baruch," the "Assumption of Moses," the "Ascension of Isaiah," the "Book of Jubilees," the "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," and over a score of others are mainly pious frauds, of no use to anyone except scholars who wish to study the peculiar growth and expression of the religious ideas of that interesting period just preceding and succeeding the Christian era. They are of service, also, because they show us that the conscience of that time did not condemn the issuing of books under fictitious titles and containing false versions of events, provided the intention of the writer was to edify mankind, promote morality, or arouse the patriotic feeling of the people.

A critic says: "A large number of such spurious writings are *happily* lost or forgotten." It may be so; nevertheless, when all that remains has been thoroughly investigated by scholars, we shall gain, as the result, a more accurate idea of the progress of religious thought and a more connected view of the real condition of the world during that important period of its history. Dr. Edersheim's "Life of Jesus, the Messiah" shows us how much more lifelike and clear that wonderful life can be made to appear to people of the present day—especially those living in western lands—by the patient study of dry and unpromising materials. No study is grander and more elevating than the study of man's religious conceptions. The blurred records of man's dealings with his Maker in the past touch us with pathetic force, and, from their very imperfection and broken utterance and weighty testimony to the inspiring and consoling belief that "the hand that made us is divine," will work with us forever.

CHAPTER II.

FROM 423 TO 323 B. C.—NEHEMIAH TO ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

THE period between the Old Testament prophets and the advent of Jesus Christ has been called the "silent centuries." It is, however, by no means a correct designation, for "God hath not left himself without witness" at any time, and during this special season of trial and change his Spirit continued to "move," and inspire, and comfort not less than in the ancient days.

It is true, however, that less is recorded of the events of this century — that is, from the time of Nehemiah to the death of Alexander the Great — than of any period in Jewish history after the reign of David. Josephus, who helps us to fill up some gaps and to understand certain difficulties in the Bible, has written only a few lines about this obscure period.

These few lines let in enough light for us to see that the priests of that day were "men of like passions" with the common people. About 354 B. C., in the reign of Artaxerxes II., one of his generals, an avaricious man, named Bagoses, who had succeeded in raising himself to a position of great power under the Persian monarch, was commander of the troops in Syria and Phœnicia. Like most oriental officials, he took advantage of his position to amass wealth. The high priest Johanan had a brother, named Joshua, who sent bribes to Bagoses with the design of getting the office for himself. Bagoses received the money and promised the high priesthood to Joshua, who went to the temple, probably, to announce his success to his brother. Johanan was enraged at such conduct; a fight took place, and Joshua was killed. When Bagoses heard of it he proceeded to Jerusalem under the pretext of punishing Johanan for resisting the Persian authority and slaying his brother. In reality his motive was to use the opportunity to extort more money for himself. He accordingly ordered the people to pay a fine of 50 drachmas for every lamb offered in sacrifice and to bring the money every morning before the sacrifice was performed. Probably this expiatory tax amounted to more than ten thousand dollars per year. And for seven long years the Jewish people had to pay it; when the Persian monarch died it was remitted. Bagoses also violated the precept which forbade any layman to enter the Sanctuary, and when the priest, pointing to the decree of prohibition, attempted to prevent his intrusion, he tauntingly asked, "Am not I purer than the dead body of him you slew in the temple?"

This seems to have been the first time that the office of high priest was made an object of intrigue; afterward it was bought and sold to the serious degradation of the priestly dignity and the injury of religion. The rulers of Judea considered themselves qualified to appoint the occupant of the holy office and made it a means of gain. This story of Johanan and his brother does not give us a favorable opinion of the spirit which existed in the family of the high priest.

It was well for the Jewish religion that its existence and growth did not depend on the priests and Levites. There were many godly men and women who did far more for the preservation and extension of the knowledge of God than those who professed to be the teachers and guardians of the truth. When prophet and priest erred and strayed from the right way, the simple, devout people who feared God and strove to keep his commandments held fast their integrity and trained their children to imitate the ancient saints and heroes.

One very important development of the religious system of the Jews probably took place during this Persian era. The synagogue became one of the chief supports of Judaism, but of the circumstances attending its commencement we know very little. Probably we shall be safe in ascribing its origin and extension to the need felt by the people for more help in their

religious life than was furnished by private devotion and occasional visits to the temple at Jerusalem. Some have thought that Ezra was the founder of the synagogue. He is also said to have originated the sects of Pharisees and scribes. But origins are often difficult to trace, and especially so when they belong to periods of war and disturbance. It is, however, both interesting and important to observe that even in this dull, silent century (423-323 B. C.), some progress was being made, and that in the hearts of the people existed the desire to know more of God and his law.

The Captivity had taught the Jews that their religious life could be maintained at a distance from Jerusalem and its grand services. When ritual could not be performed, they turned their energies to the teaching of their children and neighbors, to reading their Scriptures, and to private devotion. It is in the furnace of affliction that the richest experience is acquired; men "learn in suffering what they teach in song!" By enforced absence from their own country the Jews learned the lesson of independence—a lesson which, in all probability, they would never have learned if they had remained in peace and prosperity at home. Its immense value was not apparent until they returned to their own land. When they reached Jerusalem, their first desire was to build the temple and reestablish its services. In spite of great difficulties this was accomplished, but the troubled state of the country, caused by Samaritans and others, prevented many people from visiting Jerusalem in order to perform their vows and hear the reading and exposition of the law. The synagogues, therefore, were instituted throughout the land to meet the wishes of the people for more religious instruction. Thus defeat, captivity, hindrances, and disturbances all worked together for the advancement of the kingdom of God.

One of the good results of the synagogue services was the diffusion of copies of the sacred writings throughout the land. The scribes, who appear to have been few in the time of Ezra, increased in number. They made copies of the Scriptures, read them in the synagogue and expounded them to the people. This not only conveyed to all the wise and beautiful words of comfort and counsel uttered by the seers and prophets of old, but in addition the multiplication of rolls of the holy writings helped to prevent the annihilation of the Hebrew Scriptures in the dark days of Antiochus Epiphanes. A temple library and the few rolls possessed by priests may be easily destroyed, but when copies of the written Word have become the cherished treasure of hundreds of people, it is impossible for tyrants or bigots to burn all of them, however they may strive to do so.

A further advantage was that no one could plead ignorance as an excuse for violating the moral law, for the scribes had made it possible for the religious teacher to say, "The Word is very nigh thee, in thy mouth and thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

Kuenen tells that it was in this period that "temple song and temple poetry were at their prime." The service itself had assumed a more spiritual character and had been made to minister less to symbolic representation, and more to the clear expression of moral and religious thoughts. Thus this "silent" Persian period was by no means a time of barrenness or starvation, for God who works unceasingly, influences his children and leads them to be coworkers with him.

The comparative peace of the Jews while they were under Persian rule was no doubt partly caused by the affinities of belief between the two nations. With some important differences, it was yet true that there was more resemblance between their religious customs and ideas than between those of any other peoples of antiquity. As the result of these similarities in their religions, it became possible for each race to learn valuable lessons from the other. Both nations had a high conception of the Supreme Being; both believed in heavenly hosts occupied in his service as messengers to mankind. Both forbade the use of images, and both discountenanced the immoralities allowed if not enjoined by the religious systems of some of the neighboring nations.

The Jews believed in one Great Cause; the Persians in the dual powers of good and evil, light and darkness. On the doctrine of God, the Jew doubtless contributed something to elevate the conceptions of the Persian, while the doctrines of the resurrection and immortality were rendered clearer and more convincing to the Jews by the contributions the Persians brought to them on these subjects. As one writer expresses it, "the germs which lay hidden in Judaism were fertilized by contact with a religion in which they had arrived at maturity. Thus life's storms and changes enlighten mankind, men run to and fro and knowledge is increased." On the whole, earth's antagonisms destroy evil and develop goodness. The psalms of the Captivity are among the most beautiful as well as the most profound in the Bible. Graetz says: "While the Exile lasted, the grief and longing, which kept the captives in constant and breathless expectation, brought forth the fairest blossoms of prophecy and poetry." In the same way the contact with Persian thought aroused the Jews to fresh mental exertions, which proved their capacity and worth as religious teachers and thinkers.

In the year 334 B. C., Alexander the Great began his campaign against Persia. He soon triumphed over Darius III. The Jews had been very loyal to the Persian monarchs and might have been disposed to resist Alexander; but the reputation of his valor and mighty army had been carried everywhere, and for once in its history the little nation of Palestine had sufficient sense not to resist where there was no chance of success. Arnold in his "Rome" gives a graphic picture of the resistless march of Alexander and the impression it created on the mind of the world: "Asia beheld with astonishment and awe the uninterrupted progress of a hero, the sweep of whose conquests was as wide and as rapid as that of her own barbaric kings or of the Scythian or Chaldean hordes; but, far unlike the transient whirlwinds of Asiatic warfare, the advance of the Macedonian leader was no less deliberate than rapid. At every step the Greek power took root and the language and civilization of Greece were planted from the shores of the Ægean Sea to the banks of the Indus, from the Caspian and the great Hyrcanian plain to the cataracts of the Nile; to exist actually for nearly a thousand years and in their effects to endure forever. In the tenth year after he had crossed the Hellespont, Alexander, having won his vast dominion, entered Babylon, and resting from his career in that oldest seat of earthly empire, he steadily surveyed the mass of various nations which owned his sovereignty and revolved in his mind the great work of breathing into this huge but inert body the living spirit of Greek civilization. In the bloom of youthful manhood, at the age of thirty-two, he paused from the fiery speed of his earlier course, and for the first time gave the nations an opportunity of offering their homage before his throne. They came from all the extremities of the earth, to celebrate his greatness or to solicit his protection." It was in his early, dashing, victorious days that he "ran in the fury of his power," overthrew the forces of Persia, and won a world-wide reputation and an almost universal empire.

No wonder, then, that when, in the year 333 B. C., he visited Jerusalem the Jews promptly submitted to his rule. As they peaceably accepted his sovereignty, he dealt kindly with them, "granted free use of their ancestral laws, and especially of the year of jubilee inaugurated so solemnly a hundred years before under Nehemiah; he promised to befriend the Jewish settlements of Babylonia and Media and invited any who were so disposed to serve in his army." Under Alexander the Jews seem to have lived in peace and quietness in the enjoyment of their religious rites and undisturbed by the wars and commotions of the world outside Palestine. In the year 323 B. C., Alexander died, and his dominions were divided among his generals, Judea becoming a province of the Egyptian kingdom of Ptolemy Soter. But the introduction of Greek influence into Palestine by Alexander was destined to produce marvelous effects, not only on the Jews, but through them on the world. The religious thought of the world to-day is very different from what it would have been if the New Testament had not been written in Greek; and the influence of Grecian philosophic and religious ideas on the constitution,



THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

the doctrines, and the spirit of the Christian Church has been simply marvelous. We have reaped the advantages of Alexander's conquest; but to the Jews this infusion of Greek ideas proved the fruitful cause of strife, division, and calamity.

From the days of Ezra and Nehemiah — perhaps even earlier — the germs were gradually developing which finally found manifestation in the Jewish sects, or schools of religious thought. Of these most important were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes.

THE PHARISEES. We have no clear and full accounts of the rise of these different schools of thought, and hence we can only faintly trace the connection between the separatist or puritan party of Ezra, and the Chasidim or the "Pious" who became numerous and influential by the time of the Maccabean revolt, and the Pharisees who were so powerful in the days of John Hyrcanus — 135 B. C. Still, there is no doubt the Chasidim were the religious descendants of Ezra's puritans, and the Pharisees were the successors of the Chasidim. Many Christians are somewhat hard in their judgment of the Pharisees; the conflict between them and Jesus Christ led them to take an active part in the controversy which caused him to be put to death. For their conduct on this occasion they have always been under a ban; but there is no doubt that in their early days the Pharisees were among the most zealous for the Jewish religion, and rendered good service in resisting the lax and idolatrous tendencies of the people. It was not easy then, any more than it is now, to come forward and protest against worldliness; and yet the Pharisees did this with unflinching courage and persistency. The very name "Pharisee" was probably a term of reproach. They called themselves the "Associates;" their opponents styled them the "Separatists," and ridiculed their professedly pious isolation and rigid attention to the minute details of the laws and rites of the Jewish code.

One admirable trait in their character must not be forgotten. Originally they took the side of the poor against their rich exactors, and the part of the people against their powerful oppressors. Moreover, anyone, whatever his station, could join the ranks of the Pharisees, while the Sadducees formed a select social order, which none but Aaron's descendants or the sons of distinguished families could enter. A scribe or Sadducee might feel free to swim with the popular stream, but a Pharisee was bound to maintain at all cost the tenets of his party. Had there been no resolute upholders of the strict letter of the law, it is difficult to see how the Jews would have been preserved from becoming degraded, licentious idolaters, "like to the nations about them."

In course of time the Pharisees became more powerful and less popular, and in the days of Jesus by far the majority of the scribes belonged to their party. Hence, they are often mentioned together in the gospels as partners in crafty and unrighteous schemes to acquire "widows' houses," and everything else within reach. Doubtless the Pharisees, as a class, deserved all the "woes" Jesus hurled at them, and yet there must have been many among such a large body, who, like Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, Hillel, and Gamaliel, were earnest, self-denying, God-fearing men. Some of them, we know, believed in Jesus, and in later days Pharisees took Paul's part when he was in great disfavor and danger. Hence, we ought not to think so hardly of them as some Christians do, nor condemn a whole sect because many of its members were unworthy and wicked.

A gifted Jewess¹ writes thus of the Pharisees: "The Pharisees were rigid upholders of the law. They believed it to be the guiding rule of life, not only for the individual but for the State. They tightened and narrowed while they strengthened the obligations of the law. They insisted not only on a high standard of duty, but on the most minute observance of every precept, Mosaic and traditional. To be always dreadfully in earnest makes a man a distinctly uncomfortable companion. The zeal of the Pharisees might make them pious and devout, might render them first-rate martyrs, and even very tolerable bigots, but hardly, under

¹ K. Magnus.

any circumstances, good courtiers. The Sadducees must always have been pleasanter people to live with. In the fighting days, the 'zealous' Chasidim had been a very satisfactory court circle of soldiers for the warlike Maccabees, and the first two priest-kings were well content to find their mainstay in the Pharisaic faction. But as things grew more settled and peaceful, the Pharisees grew more exacting, somewhat irksome companions. The numerous restrictions which traditional law enforces on the will and desires of man made princes and courtiers look on the Pharisees as uncomfortable people, as obstacles."

We have endeavored to do full justice to the virtues of the Pharisees. They were conscientious, conservative guardians of the law, and yet they were sufficiently open-minded to accept the later and clearer views regarding the immortality of the soul. But with them, as with many other earnest people in various lands and at different periods, zeal degenerated into unreasoning bigotry, so that they finally "reached the point at which lofty aspirations petrify into hard dogmatic form, at which patriots become partisans and saints are turned into fanatics, and the holiest names are perverted into by-words and catch-words." This state is fatal to candid study, to clear perception of truth, and to that spirituality which intuitively discerns the prophet of God and welcomes his message. Consequently, the Pharisees, instead of accepting Jesus of Nazareth as a teacher sent by God, disdainfully rejected his Gospel, and joined hands with those who put him to death. Blindness had overtaken them through their neglect of the internal reality for external affairs and innumerable rites. They could not recognize the real character and aims of Jesus, for if they had, "they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory," nor have allowed others to do so. We see the errors of the Pharisees, but the same mistake is made by members of Christian churches now. Men and women, of whom the world is not worthy, are persecuted — sometimes sacrificed — by the same blind, intolerant spirit which in ancient days possessed the Jewish Pharisees.

THE SADDUCEES. "The name Sadducee was probably derived from the 'Tadikah,' or 'Righteousness,' which was the leading watchword of the party. The Sadducees were more correctly regarded as a class than as a sect. If rabbis and scribes were often the representatives of the Pharisees, the Sadducees were represented by the official leaders of the nation. Many of the priests were Sadducees, and for a considerable time the head of the State was also the high priest. The Sadducees had no taste for the painful strictness and self-denial of the Pharisees. They were satisfied with the law as it appeared in the written code, without adopting the oral tradition on which the Pharisees laid so much stress. They were contented with the reputation of being 'just' (as their name implied) and fulfilling the requirements of the law, without aspiring to the reputation of 'sanctity'; that is, of increasing the minute distinctions between themselves and their Gentile neighbors. Their view of human conduct was that it was within the control of a man's own will, and was not overruled by the decrees of fate; their view of the future existence was that, as in the Mosaic law, a veil was drawn across it, and that, according to the saying of Antigonus of Socho, men were not to be influenced by the hope of future reward and punishment."¹

As a rule, the Sadducees took life much less seriously than the Pharisees did, and were content to observe the principal rites of Judaism without disturbing themselves about every detail. The future world — if such existed — was quite a distinct realm from the present, far less interesting in itself, and worthy of only a secondary place in human estimation. Many were rich, and in their riches found considerable "consolation" for the ills of this present life; heaven was too uncertain or too distant to seem worth much anxiety.

The Pharisees had, on their side, learning and numbers; the Sadducees, wealth, culture, and often aristocratic connections. To make use of modern political terms, we may say that the Sadducees considered themselves liberals, and that the Pharisees were, by contrast, decidedly

¹ Stanley.

conservative in their aims. The Sadducee, in fact, rather prided himself on his liberal principles. He would have told you that he cordially admitted every man's right to his opinions, and that he never meddled with other people's observance. Sects often quarrel, and the Pharisees and Sadducees were no exceptions to the general rule; but there can be little doubt that this perpetual contention was in the end better for the Jews than the exclusive dominance of either school of thought. A nation composed entirely of Sadducees would have eventually lost all spiritual religion, and a nation of Pharisees discussing theories and performing endless rites would have drifted into starvation or anarchy.

"The Sadducees, of course, had no religious or theological system of their own. Who would look for one in an aristocratic political party?" It is often asserted that they rejected the whole of the Old Testament, except the Pentateuch. This is incorrect, for in the records of their controversies which have been preserved in the Talmud, no trace can be found of their setting aside either the whole of the Prophets and writings, nor even of the traditions which were so venerated by the Pharisees. They acted as a check on the narrowness and impractical ways of the Pharisees, and thus did good service; but they were unprogressive, unsympathetic, and did little or nothing to encourage study and aspiration after the highest and noblest things.

The typical Sadducee doubtless cherished a special admiration for the Book of Ecclesiastes, not only because it contained his creed, but also a very interesting and congenial expression of his favorite philosophy of men and things. The high priest who condemned Jesus was a Sadducee, and no doubt he and many of his party had a considerable share in causing his death; but, to be just toward them, we must remember that they were largely influenced by the thought expressed in John xi, 50: "It is expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." Therefore, to prevent national calamity, they helped to destroy one whose whole life had been spent in doing good, the teacher, friend, and lover of his people.

THE ESSENES. "The most probable explanations of the word Essene point not to a personal leader or founder, but to the moral and social characteristics of the school. It indicates either the 'watchful contemplation,' or the 'affectionate devotion,' or the 'silent thoughtfulness' of those who retired from the strife of parties, and nourished a higher spiritual life in communities of their own."¹ Most nations that have advanced far enough in civilization and the knowledge of religion possess a "mystic" school. Among the Hebrews this place was first filled by the Nazarites, and there is good reason to believe that the Essenes represent a later development of this school. They have been called the "monks of Judaism," and no doubt they are the nearest approach to monks that ever existed among the Jews.

The Essenes never became so numerous and powerful as the Pharisees and Sadducees, but possibly their influence was quite as valuable to the religious life of the nation as that of either of these great parties. Numbers are not the only gauge of force. Lao-tse, Buddha, Mohammed, and Luther were once lonely, obscure men, brooding over the deep problems of life and religion. In time each of them became the leader and guide of millions. That the New Testament shows clear evidence of the influence of Essenic thought is undoubted by scholars. Thus the contemplative devotion of this little band of mystics has affected the religious thought of the Christian Church for nearly two thousand years and will continue to do so for centuries yet to come. Graetz says that this little sect "became the basis of a movement, which, mixing with new elements, produced a revolution in the history of the world."

The very important phrase "kingdom of heaven" was probably first used by the Essenes, and from them passed into the religious vocabulary of John the Baptist. Whether John was originally an Essene, is uncertain, but we know the Essenes were in the habit of bathing every morning in a fresh spring of water, and from this they were called by some "Morning Baptists."

¹ Stanley.

It is thought by some that the name Essene was derived from the Chaldean word "Assai," which means a "bather."

Josephus is the chief authority on the religious and social system of the Essenes. He mentions them as existing in the second century B. C., but there is no doubt they had been living their quiet, retired life for a long time before they became numerous enough to attract attention as a religious sect. As a society they possessed many admirable characteristics. With the practice of severe asceticism they combined a rare benevolence to the poor. Oaths were forbidden and obedience to rulers strictly inculcated. They practiced community of goods, despised riches, abstained from pleasure, and scrupulously regulated their lives even to the smallest details.

Before sunrise the Essenes rose, and with their faces turned to the east said their morning prayers as if they were imploring the sun to appear. There is not sufficient evidence to prove that they actually worshiped the sun, and the clear statement in their regulation, "No one rules but God," indicates that they were simple monotheists. It may have been their dread of pronouncing the name of the Almighty which led them to refrain from addressing their worship directly to him. Therefore, they approached him through the grandest, brightest symbol of his power, as the Parsees do to this day.

They were a secret and exclusive society, having their own priests, judges, and other officers. Philo says that in his day — 30 A. D.—they numbered four thousand; he sums up their teaching as "Love of God, of virtue, and of man." This is admirable, but certainly some of their notions were peculiar. They wore their clothes until they dropped to pieces. White linen was the material they preferred for their garments — possibly that it might remind them of the purity they felt bound to strive after. They rejected animal sacrifices, and lived on fruit and vegetables. Marriage was prohibited, although some among them had permission to marry simply for the sake of perpetuating the order. These less strict Essenes were not allowed to reside in the limits of their settlements, but in all other respects they followed the same mode of life. They were chiefly agriculturists, cattle-breeders, and bee-keepers. In the winter their common outside dress was a hairy mantle, and in the summer they wore an under-garment without sleeves. A leathern apron was used when at work and their tasks were arranged with all the monotonous regularity of a monastery. On the seventh day, which they kept as a sabbath with even more rigidity than it was by the Pharisees, they attended the synagogues, where the law and the rest of the ancestral books were read and expounded. In respect for Moses they exceeded the most strict of their countrymen; blasphemy against his name, like the profanation of the sacred name of God, was punished with death.

The Essenes required three years to be passed in a novitiate, during which time a candidate was tested as to his fitness for joining the society. If he proved satisfactory, he was admitted; but, before partaking of the initiatory common meal, he must swear, by the most awful oaths, that he would reverence the Deity, do justice to men, hurt no one voluntarily or at the command of another, hate the unjust and assist the just, render fidelity to all men but especially to the rulers—"seeing that no one rules but God." In addition he must vow that if he should ever bear rule himself he would make no violent use of his power, nor outshine by superior display those set under him. He must solemnly promise to make it his aim to cherish the truth and unmask liars, to abstain from theft and unjust gain, to hide nothing from his fellow-members, to divulge none of their affairs to other men, even at the risk of death. He must transmit their doctrines unchanged, keep secret the books of the society, and the names of the angels.

Graetz says: "The Essenes faithfully handed down in their theosophic system the names as well as the importance and position of the various angels." One is a little puzzled to imagine how they became acquainted with the angels and their ranks and occupations; perhaps their

hard work and plain living facilitated high thinking on heavenly things. They professed to be able to fathom the deepest mysteries, to answer the most difficult questions as to the being of God and his relations with the heavenly powers and the lower creatures.

"The chief aim of the Essenes was without doubt the attainment to prophetic ecstasy, so that they might become worthy of the Divine Spirit. They believed that through an ascetic life they might reawaken the long-silent echo of the heavenly voice; and, this end gained, prophecy would be renewed and men and youths would again behold divine visions and once more see the uplifting of the veil which hides the future, and the great Messianic kingdom would be revealed. The kingdom of heaven would commence, and all pain and trouble would at one stroke be ended." The Essenes were regarded as holy men, miracle-workers, seers of future events, and interpreters of dreams. They professed to be able to do all these things, also to cast out demons and cure diseases with the aid of a book said to have been composed by King Solomon. "Thus the Essenes united the highest and the lowest aims—the endeavor to lead a pious life combined with the most vulgar superstitions."

Yet one cannot but respect men who strove so earnestly to learn and practice high spiritual principles. They regarded their souls as precious when the majority of those around them cared only for the body. Their prayers and their exhortations, their meditations and aspirations, combined with their mistaken faith in immortality, must have done much to purify and ennoble their own lives and the lives of those to whom they ministered.

Underneath all the errors and superstitions of the Essenes must have been an intense thirst for the living God, and earnest, sincere effort to come into his presence and be made like him. Beneath the feeble, imperfect human aspirations, there moved the uplifting, enlightening grace of the Father, who unceasingly works to renovate the hearts of all his children, so that here and hereafter they may be partakers of his perfect bliss.

CHAPTER III.

FROM 323 TO 167 B. C.—THE SYRIAN DYNASTY.

FEW nations have a more interesting history than the Jews, and no chapters in their history are more fascinating and instructive than those which tell us the story of brave old Mattathias and his valiant sons. No nobler family ever occupied the attention of Jewish writers or won a more lasting renown. As it is often darkest before dawn, so the clouds were never blacker, nor the force of the tempest of affliction mightier, than when the aged Mattathias struck the first heroic blow at the mean tyranny which was degrading and defiling his country.

There was never a time when resistance to injustice and oppression seemed more hopeless, and the task of arousing a band of patriots to strike for freedom more difficult. It is absolutely necessary to give here a brief outline of the horrible humiliations which the Jews endured through many long dark years, before the grand old man, Mattathias—white with more than a century's frosts, but brave with the vigor born and sustained by purity and religious enthusiasm—hewed down the perverter of his people.

Alexander the Great died in 323 B. C., and his dominions were divided among his generals. "Egypt and Syria became the rival powers in the East, and for over a century Palestine was 'like a shuttlecock between two battledores.' For a while the Egyptians had the best of the game, and under the first three Ptolemies the Jews were very mildly tossed. They had to pay tribute to Egypt, but their home government was left to their own high

priests and their religion was not interfered with." In the year 203 B. C. the king of Syria, Antiochus the Great, took Palestine from Ptolemy of Egypt, but still allowed the Jews to govern themselves. This policy was continued by Seleucus, the son and successor of Antiochus, but as the civilization of the Syrians was Greek, their habits of thought and religious practices were very repugnant to the monotheistic ideas of strict Jews. For a time this antagonism did not become serious, but when, in 175 B. C., Antiochus Epiphanes began to reign, matters grew rapidly worse. Antiochus was as intolerant as the Jews were, and, as the writer of the First Book of Maccabees tersely expresses it, "evils were multiplied in the earth." The storm burst and beat heavily on a feeble and, alas, often a disunited people.

We need not wonder that, after seeing "wickedness in the place of judgment and iniquity in the place of righteousness," the author of Ecclesiastes (who some think wrote about this time) should declare that since "the crooked could not be made straight," and evil flourished in almost unvarying order, his heart "despaired of all the labor he had taken under the sun," and that all on earth was "vanity and vexation of spirit." From the time of Alexander's suzerainty over Palestine, 333 B. C., Greek influence had gradually made itself felt, and it is not to be wondered at that in the course of a century and a half a considerable number of the Jews had grown attached to the freer customs and more vivacious manners of the Greeks. Of this "Greek age" Ewald says, "The first decades of this period passed away amid the continuous wars of Alexander, and the still more devastating campaigns of his successors, which were little favorable to the fusion of the two nationalities. Beneath the tinsel of Greek culture the times were exceedingly disordered, and all the nations of Asia had much to suffer from the craving for new dominions and the perpetual wars of the successors of Alexander, whose own thirst for conquest was only quenched by death." During the whole of this period Palestine was the battle-ground of the rival nations, Syria and Egypt. Their armies were almost continually traversing the land and carrying fire and sword even into its most secluded places.

Amid these overwhelming discouragements a faithful remnant had maintained their faith in God and their zeal for the institutions founded and preserved by their famous prophets, priests, and kings. No people has clung to its religion with more constancy and conscientious tenacity than did these Jews. But doubtless the very attempts of the strict orthodox party to restrain their people had in many cases hastened the apostasy their rigid restrictions and stern denunciations were intended to prevent, just as in later days the severe regulations of the Puritans of Cromwell's time provoked, it is charged, the laxity and excesses of the reign of Charles II.

This stern puritanism of the strict Jews not only repelled many of their own people, but directly cultivated the hatred of their masters, the Syrians. Instead of reflecting that, as they were the subjects of Antiochus who loved things Grecian as much as they loved things Jewish, it would be the part of prudence to avoid occasions of friction, they seemed to be all the more resolved to assert their national and religious peculiarities. They always believed themselves to be a favored nation and entered into relations with other countries with reluctance, and as if they were conferring a benefit on their inferiors. It is easy to imagine how such a people would resent the introduction of Greek fashions, sports, and religion. Dean Stanley says: "It is startling to think of the sudden influx of Grecian manners into the very center of Palestine. The modesty of the sons and daughters of Abraham was shocked by the establishment of the Greek palestra under the very citadel of David,¹ where, in defiance of some of the most sensitive feelings of their countrymen, the most active of the Jewish youths completely stripped themselves, and ran, wrestled, leaped in the public sports like the Grecian athletes, wearing the broad-brimmed hat, in imitation of the headgear of the god Hermes, guardian of the gymnastic festivals. Even the priests in the temple caught the infection,² left their sacrificial duties

¹ II. Maccabees iv, 12.

² II. Maccabees iv, 14.

unfinished, and ran down from the temple court to take part in the spectacle, as soon as they heard the signal for throwing the discus, which was to lead off the games."

The author of the First Book of Maccabees candidly admits that the first steps toward this adoption of Greek customs were taken by "wicked men" from among the people of Israel themselves who courted the changes the Syrian king strove to bring about. It is also worthy of note that as soon as Antiochus wished to raise money by selling the office of high priest, a Jew — Jason — was found, who showed he was as corrupt as any pagan by promptly agreeing to buy it for the yearly sum of 360 talents. Three years later, his brother Menelaus, sent by him to carry the yearly money to the king, treacherously offered a yet larger bribe on his own account, and for the sum of 660 talents secured the office of high priest. No doubt Antiochus regarded this way of increasing his revenue as very satisfactory, but it led to the heaviest troubles for the Jews, for when Jason found he had been outbid and deprived of the priesthood by his brother, he resolved that on the first favorable occasion he would endeavor to recover his position. His opportunity arrived when a false report reached Palestine that Antiochus had died in Egypt while on a campaign against King Ptolemy. Jason at once set to work. He raised a body of 3,000 men, made an assault upon Jerusalem and entered the city, while his rival, Menelaus, took refuge in the castle which was occupied by the Syrian garrison. Jason mercilessly slew all the citizens who opposed him, but could not drive his brother from the fortress. In due time news of these disturbances reached Antiochus. He may have thought that the whole Jewish nation had revolted, or it may be that his real reason for deciding to march on Jerusalem was simply cupidity. At any rate his treasury was empty, and he knew of the wealth of the temple, hence he assaulted and captured the city. His attack was not resisted, yet he treated it as a conquered city. The temple was pillaged and profaned, the city sacked, and about forty thousand people cruelly massacred, while a large number were carried away to be sold for slaves. The value of the precious metals taken was estimated at 1,800 silver talents, or nearly \$1,750,000. This took place in the year 169 B. C.

The historian evidently felt that words were too poor to describe these terrible calamities and their effect upon the minds of his people. Insult was added to injury, for Antiochus went into the Holy of Holies and took up the holy vessels in his own polluted hands with "very proud" words, which probably expressed his utter contempt for a religion which required such paraphernalia to carry on its services. It is very probable that in his marchings through Palestine, Antiochus had been impressed with the fertility of its soil, the numerous herds of fine cattle, the abundance of fruit, and the general appearance of wealth and comfort. He saw that the services and sacrifices of the temple were very costly, and doubtless regarded the whole system as a wastefully extravagant one, which served only to enrich a covetous and vain priesthood. If this expensive cult could be exchanged for a simpler one, the economy effected would enable him to more than double the taxation of the people and thus materially increase his revenue. Hence, when about two years later, after his fourth Egyptian campaign, he was again in need of funds, he despatched Apollonius, his chief collector of tribute, with a force of 22,000 men, to "further punish the Jewish people," but doubtless his principal reason was to strike terror into them and then wring from them all the money possible. He gave orders to kill all the men and sell all the women and children for slaves. The sale of such numbers of captives would help to fill the treasury of the wicked king.

These inhuman orders were relentlessly executed. Apollonius suddenly attacked the people of Jerusalem on the sabbath day without any pretext, for his soldiers had been peaceably received into the town. The hour when the people were assembled at worship was selected, so that none escaped except those who could hide themselves in caves or fly to the mountains. He then gathered the riches of the city together, destroyed the houses, set the city on fire in several places, pulled down the city walls, and built a strong fortress on Acra, a

hill which overlooked the temple. The Jews were forbidden to enter the holy place, and from this time — 167 B. C. — the daily sacrifices in the temple ceased.

Antiochus then issued a decree from Antioch that the Jews should utterly abandon all their religious practices, their circumcision, sacrifices, and sabbath-keeping. He sent Athenæus, a Greek idolater, to initiate the Jews into the idolatrous rites of the Grecian religion and to punish with the most cruel deaths all who refused to obey his orders. The people were to be forced to eat swine's flesh and the holy temple itself was to be reconsecrated to Jupiter Olympus — "the father of gods and men." A terrible persecution followed. "The Books of the Law, multiplied and treasured with so much care from the days of Ezra, were burned. Many Jews assisted and bowed before the oppressor. But others dared the worst rather than submit. Some concealed themselves in the huge caverns in the neighboring hills, and were suffocated by fires lighted at the mouth."¹ "Women who had dared to circumcise their children were tortured and paraded with their murdered infants hanging round their necks; aged elders were put to a cruel and lingering death for refusing to eat the flesh of the unclean beast. But the stubborn spirit of the nation could not be broken, though the party of the Hellenizers was so strong in the capital that it was impossible for the few devout Jews left there to do more than meet martyrdom courageously. The noble reply of the aged Eleazar, when under torture, shows the manner in which Jewish elders refused even the semblance of apostacy. "It becometh not our age," he said, "in any wise to dissemble whereby many young men might think that Eleazar, being four-score years old and ten, was now gone to a strange religion."² "His venerable presence touched not his persecutors and their threats failed to move his constancy, for he walked boldly to the rack and on it was scourged to death. 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is One,' was the last utterance of his dying lips."

"There are two psalms at least — the seventy-fourth and the seventy-ninth — which can hardly be the expression of any period but this. They describe with passionate grief the details of the profanation of the Sanctuary, the gates in flames, the savage soldiers hewing down the delicate carved work with ax and hatchet, like woodmen in a forest, the roar of the irreverent multitude, the erection of the heathen emblems; they sigh over the indignity done to the corpses slain in the successive massacres by their being left outside of the walls of the city to be devoured by vulture and jackal; they look in vain for a prophet to arise; they console themselves with the recollection of the overthrow of the huge monsters of the earlier empires, and with the hope that this crisis will pass in like manner."

Antiochus no doubt formed his judgment of the Jews from the time-serving apostates he had met in Antioch. Of the deep-rooted attachment of the bulk of the nation to their ancient law and religion, and of the stubborn endurance and resolute courage of which they were capable, he was entirely ignorant. With true oriental despotism, he meant to "stamp out the Jewish superstition." It seems probable that once every month each town was visited and a bloody assize held. But oftentimes excessive severity defeats its own end. There is a limit to human endurance, and when that limit is passed a whirlwind of vengeance is engendered which sweeps away tyrants like chaff. When hard-hearted persecutors enforce conformity under the penalty of death, revolution may be expected. Occasionally men abjectly submit for a time, but oftener a desperate resistance is provoked, which, when once started, is carried on with that reckless courage no prospect of suffering or death can daunt. When life is made unbearable by oppression, men are apt to resolve that it is better to die fighting than to live under a tyrant's heel. Though unknown, heroes lived in Israel yet, and that which crushes ordinary men inspires the hero. The darkest hour brings with it the deliverer.

¹ Stanley.

² Conder.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM 167 TO 135 B. C. — THE MACCABEAN REVOLT.

MATTATHIAS, an aged priest, was living in Jerusalem at the time the city was sacked and the temple polluted. When the persecution began he retired to his ancestral city Modin, a beautiful place in the mountains, about twenty miles from the capital. Here in deep sorrow he mourned over the sad condition of his countrymen. The grief of the aged is especially touching, and if the writer of the First Book of Maccabees was not mistaken, Mattathias must have been more than one hundred and forty years old when these troubles overtook him. How intensely he felt the desolation of the holy city and the miseries of his people is shown in his pathetic "Lament over Jerusalem," recorded in I. Maccabees ii, 7-13:

"Woe is me! Wherefore was I born to see the misery of my people
And the misery of the Holy City?
And to dwell there when it was delivered into the hand of the enemy
And the sanctuary into the hand of the stranger?
Her temple has become as a man of no reputation:
Her glorious vessels are carried away captive;
Her young children are slain in the streets,
Her youths with the sword of the enemy.
What nation has not inherited part of her kingdom,
Nor gotten a portion of her spoils?
All her adornment has been taken away from her;
Instead of a free woman she has become a bond-slave.
Behold, our sanctuary, even our beauty and our glory is laid waste;
The nations have profaned it:
Wherefore do we still live?"

Gradually the tide of persecution spread over the country, and even in secluded Modin, where Mattathias and his family might have expected to live unmolested, the officers of King Antiochus appeared and demanded submission to the royal edict. Mattathias was the chief man of the place and he felt the responsibility of his position. The officers flattered and endeavored to persuade him into compliance with the law which directed that every Jew should offer sacrifice to the Grecian divinities. Had they succeeded in gaining his obedience, the officers would probably have easily induced the poor and ignorant people to follow his example. The king's envoys knew of no religion which appeared to them worth suffering for, and doubtless expected the old man to comply with their demands. This, however, Mattathias was resolved never to do. Standing in the front, surrounded by his valiant sons and his neighbors, he "answered and spake with a loud voice: Though all the nations that are under the king's dominion obey him, and fall away every one from the religion of their fathers, and give consent to his commandments: yet will I and my sons and my brethren walk in the covenant of our fathers. God forbid that we should forsake the law and the ordinances. We will not hearken to the king's words, to go from our religion, either on the right hand or the left."

Where shall we find a grander picture of a noble, lion-hearted "nonconformist" than is presented to us in this terse history of the aged priest, standing firm to bear the brunt of the battle for liberty? Whatever may be our estimate of much of the Apocrypha, this record of heroic fidelity to conscience might surely be sometimes referred to in our churches, and its lessons impressed on an ease-loving, conforming generation.

Mattathias had scarcely uttered his brave speech, when a time-serving and timid Jew approached the altar to sacrifice to the Olympian gods in the sight of all the assembly. "Which thing when Mattathias saw, he was inflamed with zeal and his reins trembled, he poured forth his anger in condemnation [of the apostate] and ran and slew him upon the altar. Also the king's commissioner, who compelled men to sacrifice, he killed and the altar he pulled down." Then he went throughout the city and with a loud voice proclaimed his rallying cry, "Whoever is zealous of the law, and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me."

Mattathias and his followers knew that they could not resist the force Antiochus had at his command; so he gathered his family and supporters together and dashed into the wildest part of the hill-country of Judea—where David so long and successfully had resisted Saul—to carry on a guerilla warfare against the persecuting king. "Thus the first outbreak of the national revolt was due to the unpremeditated act of a single aged man." Doubtless Mattathias went to meet the king's officer, sad and perplexed in mind. He did not contemplate rebellion, but when he was face to face with idolatry and the apostasy of his people, he entirely cast aside all fear and care for life. His heart was true as steel, and just at the right time his courage rose to the occasion. Like Luther he "could do no other;" so he struck the blow for liberty, and thus commenced the desperate struggle which went bravely on for twenty-seven years and ended in glorious victory for the Jewish people. This end Mattathias did not live to see, but even in his last days he seems to have cherished a strong confidence in his sons—a confidence speedily justified when they fought side by side and swept the Syrian armies before them, like chaff before the wind.

For a time the little band of patriots were not attacked by the forces of Antiochus; but they did not simply hide from persecution, for, joined by the Chasidim—the Puritan party among the Jews—they attacked apostate villages, pulled down idol altars, and compelled the Jews who had submitted to Antiochus to circumcise their children and obey the law.

As soon as the officers of the king in Jerusalem realized the importance of the revolt, they pursued a number of the Jews who had taken refuge in a hold in the mountains at some distance from Mattathias and his party. When the Syrians found them, they did not at once begin the attack. Possibly they had learned by experience that Jews, when desperate, were fierce fighters; so they offered them much better terms than could have been expected. The past should be overlooked if they would only return to their homes and in future "do according to the king's commandments." This offer was promptly rejected and then the Syrians began the slaughter. They had arranged to parley with the Jews on the sabbath, because they knew this was a holy day on which the Jewish people would not fight. Hence, though the Jews remonstrated, the cowardly Syrians fell upon them and ruthlessly killed men, women, and children "to the number of a thousand souls." So perished a heroic band who preferred barren mountains with a good conscience to home comforts without it, and death to transgression of their law.

When Mattathias and his friends heard of this, they "mourned right sore." A council was held which decided not to permit attack on the sabbath, but to allow defense to the utmost on that day if attacked by others. Success followed this wise decision; their assailants were repelled and soon other bands of fugitives joined them until they became strong enough not only to defend themselves but to attack and vanquish their oppressors.

In about a year from the time he made his noble stand Mattathias passed away. He advised his sons to make Simon, the "man of counsel," their adviser, and Judas, the "mighty and strong," their captain. Once more he urged them to be "men in behalf of the law," then he gave them his blessing, was "gathered to his fathers, and all Israel made great lamentation for him."

From 167 to 161 B. C.—Few families have received more honorable mention in history than the brave and mited household of Mattathias. Ewald well says: "If it was a stroke of

rare fortune that the insurrection broke out undesignedly and was set on foot by a blameless character, it was no less fortunate that he left behind him a heroic band of five sons who were ready to carry on the contest without an instant's delay. Seldom has the world seen an instance of five brothers, animated by the same spirit and without mutual jealousy, sacrificing themselves for the same cause, of whom any one only survived another in order to carry it on, if possible, with more zeal and success." One by one the noble five fell for the cause, and each in turn became the leader of his people.

Judas Maccabæus deserved his surname "the Hammerer," for his blows fell with heavy, victorious stroke on those who strove to corrupt and oppress his fatherland. He was a born leader, brave, kind, prudent, ready, and magnanimous. Dean Stanley pictures him as "the Jewish ideal of the Happy Warrior." "There was a 'cheerfulness' diffused through the whole army when he appeared. His countrymen delighted to remember the stately appearance, as of an ancient giant, when he fastened on his breastplate, or tightened his military sash about him, or waved his protecting sword over the camp of his faithful followers. They listened with delight for the loud cheer, the roar as of a young lion — the race not yet extinct in the Jordan valley — with which he snuffed out the Israelite renegades, chasing them into their recesses, and smoking or burning them out." They rejoiced still more when he routed the armies of heathen kings. We think it would have been better if Judas and his followers had been less active in "smoking and burning out" heretical Jews. But we must not judge him by our nineteenth-century standards; according to our ideas the Maccabean leaders were not "saints," and if they had been it is doubtful whether they would have done as good service in their day and generation as they did. Rough times need vigorous rulers, and in certain circumstances severity is mercy. It is true, Mattathias in his dying exhortation reminded his sons of the mercifulness of King David; but, remembering the temper of those times, we do not feel surprised at the omission.

When Judas undertook to lead his small but resolute band of enthusiasts he had no light task. His aim was to resist the tyranny of Antiochus, to purge his own people from all corrupting Grecian practices, and to reëstablish the independence of his country. His first signal victory was gained over the "great host" of Syrians and Samaritans under the command of Apollonius. With characteristic promptitude the heroic Judas boldly met his attack half-way, completely routed his forces, slew Apollonius and took his sword, "and therewith he fought all his life long."

Victory was no sooner won than fresh dangers and greater difficulties presented themselves. When the governor of Cœle-Syria heard of the defeat and death of the king's general, he hastened to avenge him and stamp out the Jewish rebellion. This was no easy matter, for the army of Judas was composed of desperate men fighting for their lives, and homes, and religion. Moreover, they had acquired unbounded confidence in their captain. "His zeal and fearlessness, his military instinct and prudence were alike evinced in his first battle, and his choice of position, guarding the top of the dangerous pass of Beth-horon, showed qualities beyond those of a mere bandit chief."

"The scenery was full of inspiring memories, for the rugged pass had more than once before been the scene of a Jewish victory. Beneath him, near the line of the Greek advance, Judas looked toward Modin, his home, where even then his aged father lay buried — the scene of the memorable episode which had opened his career. Behind him, on its strong knoll, amid open cornlands, was Gibeon, and to the southwest was the broad, flat plain, skirted by low hills, and running down to the little village of Ajalon." Thus it was almost on the very spot where Joshua stood when he fought against the Canaanite kings that Judas Maccabæus now awaited the foes of his country. "In imagination, he might already see them rolled back from the steep steel-gray slope of barren rock, crowned by a few straggling olive trees, down to the white hills

and corn-plains beneath, even as the host of the five kings had been discomfited when overtaken by the great hailstorm on that bleak hillside."

The little company with Judas would have a clear view of the great host of Seron as it wound its way along up to the foot of Bethhoron, and as they were "faint with fasting" they may be excused for having doubted their ability to resist such a great multitude. How it was that they were not better provided with food we cannot tell. Judas may have expected to fall upon Seron's troops earlier, and naturally he would carry only what was necessary over a rugged mountain track.

The fears of his men Judas dispelled by a brave speech which infused into them a fortitude like that felt by their victorious ancestors on the same spot so long before. The rousing addresses of great generals to their men are models of effective speech. Short, incisive, earnest, they have often been one of the chief causes of the victory they predict and promise. "It is no hard matter for many to be shut up in the hand of a few; with heaven it is all one, to deliver with a great multitude or a small company." He then reminded them that while their foes came against them "in much pride and iniquity to destroy," they were fighting only for their lives and their laws. With a last animating word Judas finished his address and then "he leaped suddenly" upon the Syrians. Nothing could resist the well-timed and furious onset of the brave little company; and Seron and his host were overthrown and driven into the land of the Philistines.

Early in the year 165 B. C., Antiochus sent three new generals, Ptolemy, Nicanor, and Gorgias to "destroy and root out the strength of Israel." They had a force of 40,000 footmen and 7,000 horse, which made them so confident of success that the camp was crowded with merchants who were attracted by the prospect of a large sale of Jewish captives at low prices. Undaunted by the vast host, Judas led his men to the ridge of Mizpeh, whence they could see the deserted streets of Jerusalem, with its walls and gates closed, the silent, deserted temple, and the Greek garrison in the fortress overlooking the desolated city. With these sights before them, Judas reminded his brave followers of their ancient and recent deliverances, and stirred them to a high pitch of enthusiasm. Then they started on their long night-march of about twenty miles, and in the early morning flung themselves on the Syrian host with such force as to win another brilliant victory. Great spoil fell into the hands of the Jews, and they returned to Jerusalem joyful and triumphant. Among the battles fought between 166 and 164 B. C., this of Emmaus was considered to have accomplished most for the deliverance of the nation.

Antiochus had left Lysias in charge of his affairs when he started on his expedition to Persia, and as soon as Lysias heard of the defeat of Gorgias, he set out to crush the band of Jewish patriots. Again Judas was victorious, and while Lysias fled to Antioch to gather fresh forces, he set to work to reestablish the national religion and to purify the temple. "Once more the solemn service of the temple, described in the Mishna, was restored. In the darkness of the early morning, the master of the temple came at an uncertain hour to summon the priests who watched round the fire in the gatehouse of Moked. In the dusk they went out and fetched the lamb which had been pronounced spotless on the previous day. Standing without the altar court, they watched the first streak of day spreading behind the black outline of Olivet, and over the steel-gray ridges of Moab, until the brightness had crept round southwards as far as the direction of Hebron. Then the appointed priest went in first, and in the dim light he bathed at the great laver, and his figure could be discerned mounting the long slope of the altar, until from the heavy, gray ashes the red glow of the never-extinguished fire was stirred up and the column of smoke was thickened by new fuel. Then, and not till then, the other priests ventured into the sacred court; and as daylight brightened and the city awoke, the early sacrifice was offered, and the daily service of the temple proceeded in its appointed order."¹

¹ Conder.

Having established the temple worship, Judas turned his attention to another very important work and brought together copies of the Hebrew religious books which had been preserved by devout Jews from the wanton burnings of the "frantic" Antiochus. Then it was necessary to carry deliverance to the people who suffered from their marauding neighbors. The Edomites, the cave-dwelling Horites, who dwelt in the caverns at Petra, the sons of Bean from the flint-castles in the deserts of Rehoboth, and all the nomadic Arab tribes, had banded together for a raid upon the cornfields and vineyards of the thrifty Jewish farmers. Judas marched rapidly and fell upon them, routed them, and drove them back into their fastnesses.

Next he attacked and defeated the Ammonites, assaulted and took several hostile border cities, and then marched back to Jerusalem with songs and rejoicings.

About this time Antiochus died, and Lysias, the guardian of his son, proclaimed him king. Soon after, in the spring of 163 B. C., Lysias advanced with a force of 100,000 foot and 20,000 cavalry to punish the rebellious Jews and bring them back into subjection to Syria. Possibly he selected this time because it was a sabbatic year, and offensive warfare and tillage were alike unlawful to the Jews. Judas met the enemy at Beth-Zacharias with his usual readiness and courage; but he had to contend with a more powerful force than any he had encountered before. One new feature in this battle was the thirty-two elephants, with their towers on their backs full of archers. The Jews were surprised and in addition altogether overestimated the fighting value of these huge strange beasts. Judas did his best to encourage his men, and his heroic brother Eleazar sacrificed his life in order to teach his comrades not to be afraid of elephants. "Choosing out the leader, whose rich trappings suggested that some person of importance might be concealed in the tower, Eleazar transfixed it with his weapon, and perished beneath the huge animal as it fell." He won for himself a "perpetual name," but the Jewish army was discomfited and Judas retired to Jerusalem.

As it was a sabbatic year, the city was ill-prepared to stand a siege, for no corn had been sown, and their granaries were about exhausted. Just at this time Lysias had to return to Antioch to fight against the foster-brother of the late king; so he patched up a peace with the Jews and left Jerusalem. But for this piece of good fortune, it would have been difficult for the Jews and their valiant leaders to escape destruction.

Soon after, in the year 162 B. C., the nephew of Antiochus Epiphanes led a revolution, slew his cousin the king, and Lysias his general, and ascended the throne of Syria.

If the Jews were more favored with intrepid and wise leaders than most nations, it is equally certain that they were more cursed with factions and traitors. When unity was the indispensable thing, the party favoring the Greeks, headed by the High Priest Alcimus, went to the new monarch and invited him to make war on Judas and his band, as enemies to the sovereignty of the Syrians. The king appointed Bacchides, one of his best generals, to go to Jerusalem to collect the tribute. At first Judas and his men were successful in resisting the traitors among his own people, and for a time Bacchides did not force him to a regular battle. He preferred to endeavor to seize Judas by treachery, but in this he failed, as did also his captain, Nicanor. Failing to destroy Judas by fraud, Nicanor endeavored to take him by force. They went into battle on the plains below Modin, and once again Judas led his men to victory.

Nicanor retreated to Jerusalem full of rage, and swore he would burn the temple if he did not vanquish Judas. After preparation he went out to fight again, and this time with "the curses of the whole nation on his head." "Once more Judas Maccabæus appears on the scene as the savior of his distracted country. Suddenly he appeared in the rear of Nicanor, and established himself at Adasa in a strong position." Here with only a thousand men he waited his opportunity, and then burst on Nicanor's army of 9,000. The Syrians were routed at his first onslaught and Nicanor was slain. "The head of the defeated general, and his hand, which he had raised with a blasphemous oath against the holy house, were brought to Jerusalem and



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HEBRON.

hung up opposite the temple. Thus for a while the patriotic party triumphed, but the victory of Adasa is the last bright gleam in the story of Judas' life."

In spite of his victory, Judas seems to have arrived at the conclusion that he and his people could not maintain their ground against the overwhelming forces of Syria; so, immediately after he had defeated Nicanor, he sent ambassadors to negotiate with the Romans. He did not live to see the treaty concluded, but his policy was a wise one, and if his countrymen had possessed a little more of his prudence, the alliance might have averted many evils and secured peace and prosperity.

Soon after the envoys of Judas had set out on their long journey to Rome, Bacchides advanced with 20,000 footmen and 2,000 horsemen, down the Jordan valley, to avenge the defeat and death of Nicanor. The saddest element in this last contest of Judas must have been the fact that the High Priest Alcimus had led a number of Jews to fight on the side of the Syrians. Schism has ever been the ruin of the Jews. Judas was able to muster only 3,000 men, and when the morning of the battle came, he found that all but 800 had deserted him. It must have been a noble eight hundred that Judas led at Eleasa against the 22,000 Syrians and the renegade Jews. Some of them thought defeat was inevitable and tried to dissuade their brave leader from uselessly throwing his life away. But he was not the man to retreat, and his heroic reply was afterward cherished as his latest utterance, "God forbid that I should do this thing and flee away from them; if our time be come, let us die manfully for our brethren, and not leave behind a stain on our honor." At these stirring words—his shortest and grandest battle-speech—he and his heroes charged the right wing of Bacchides' army and drove it to the mountains. So well did the Jews fight that they were able to make head against the entire host of Syria "from morning till night." "So prolonged resistance of a mere handful of men to overwhelming numbers is scarcely on record." Still, though his last onset was successful in breaking the Syrian ranks, his men were too few, and when the left wing of Bacchides' army attacked the Jews in the rear, they were shut in between their enemies, and after a desperate fight the little band of Judas was surrounded and almost annihilated. "Judas also was killed and the remnant fled." His body was afterward found by his two worthiest brothers, and carried to its rest in the ancestral sepulcher at Modin. The lament of the whole nation for him was like that of David over Saul and Jonathan: "How is the valiant man fallen, the deliverer of Israel?"

Thus perished, 161 B. C.—when it seemed as if he could least be spared—the bravest, noblest, and most famous of the Maccabean heroes. Milman well says: "Among those lofty spirits who have asserted the liberty of their native land against wanton and cruel oppression, none have surpassed the most able of the Maccabees in accomplishing a great end with inadequate means; none ever united more generous valor with a better cause."

It has been said that "the greatest gift a hero leaves his race is to have been a hero." That gift Judas Maccabæus left his people, and it has remained an inestimable possession to this very day. "My Jewish soldiers are veritable Maccabees," said Czar Nicholas I. to Sir Moses Montefiore, when in 1846 he went to plead for his poor down-trodden Jewish brethren in Russia. The name of Maccabees was used by the Russian emperor as a testimonial to character. Here was a legacy left to his race, and presented two thousand years after date."¹

From 161 to 135 B. C.—We have seen that Eleazar, the fourth son of Mattathias, whose characteristic seems to have been an impetuous courage, gave his life for his country at the battle of Beth-Zacharias in 163 B. C., and that two years later his heroic brother Judas passed on, by the same path of valiant self-sacrifice, to his fathers. Three brothers remained: John, the eldest; Simon, the second, the "man of counsel," so confidently commended by his dying father; and the fifth brother, Jonathan the Wary. He, though the youngest, appeared to be

¹ Lady Magnus.

specially fitted by his peculiar dexterity and extreme caution for the post of leader. He had no sooner taken his position than the Syrian general Bacchides heard of it and "sought for to slay him." Jonathan showed his prudence by flying into the wilderness when it was impossible for him to take the field against the enemy.

In this time of uncertainty and danger (160 B. C.), John, his elder brother, was sent to take the family baggage and the defenseless women and children to be under the protection of the friendly tribe of Nabothites. On the way he was surprised and slain by a hostile band of the Amorites, "the children of Jambri." Thus perished another brother of the devoted band; and though, apparently, John's death was not so glorious as that of his brethren who fell in battle, yet he was as truly serving his country as they in their fighting, and his life was doubtless lost in the attempt to defend the helpless and innocent. Mattathias must have been very faithful and remarkably successful in teaching his children always to put duty before life. Such home teaching furnishes a nation with its heroes and deliverers, and makes history glow with the thrilling records of the faithful in life and death.

John's death was speedily avenged, for when, soon afterward, the children of Jambri "made a great marriage," Jonathan and his men fell upon them, slew many, dispersed the rest and took all their spoils. To us this seems a bloodthirsty affair; but doubtless it was regarded as the right way of doing things in those days, and the writer of the First Book of Maccabees appears to exult as he tells how "fully they avenged the blood of their brother," and "turned the marriage into mourning, and the melody [*i. e.*, of the musicians accompanying the procession] into lamentation." Revenge is senseless, for it not only destroys all peace, but if it were consistently carried out it would almost annihilate the human race. As soon as Bacchides heard of Jonathan's vengeance on his foes, he started at once to take vengeance on him. Jonathan was very soon in a most perilous position: the host of the Syrians was in front; the children of Jambri, thirsting for revenge, were behind; while the bend of the Jordan shut him in on the right and left. Behind them lay marsh and jungle, so that escape seemed impossible. Forced to fight against overwhelming odds, he and his men attacked Bacchides with such impetuosity that the latter retreated with the loss of a thousand men. Jonathan seized the opportunity and with his men swam across the river, and none of the Syrians attempted to follow and renew the battle.

In spite of this slight success obtained by Jonathan, the condition of the patriotic party was now very low. Bacchides held Jerusalem and most of the large cities, which he fortified and garrisoned. In addition, he adopted the policy of the Romans, and "took the chief men's sons in the country for hostages," put them into the tower at Jerusalem and then returned to Antioch.

For two years the land had rest, and then, in 157 B. C., at the instigation of the "ungodly" section of the Jews, Bacchides came again and fought against the Maccabeans. But he only met failure and defeat, which so enraged him that he turned against the Jews who had invited him to come, "slew many of them and purposed to return into his own country." Jonathan heard of this, and with his usual policy sent to Bacchides and proposed to make a treaty of peace. This he gladly accepted, and having concluded arrangements with Jonathan he returned to Syria and never again attacked the Jews.

The wicked High Priest Alcimus died in 159 B. C., and for nearly seven years the functions of the sacred office were suspended. In 153 B. C., Alexander Balas claimed the throne of Syria and offered to acknowledge Jonathan as the Prince of Judah and the high priest of the nation if he would join with him against the reigning king, Demetrius. After some very "wary" negotiations Jonathan at last pronounced in favor of Alexander and became the high priest of his people. For eight years Jonathan did the work of high priest, general, and statesman, and the Jews enjoyed peace and prosperity.

Then another usurper, Tryphon, claimed the Syrian throne, and Jonathan, true to his cautious, politic disposition, went on for some time balancing the rivals against each other, till at last Tryphon outwitted him. Jonathan was caught by treachery, carried off and put to death in an obscure village beyond the Jordan. Jonathan was a much less attractive character than Judas his brother, yet he was loyal to the cause of his people. By persistent warfare, and by negotiation when diplomacy seemed to promise most, he exerted all his native shrewdness to obtain advantages for his nation. Under his seventeen-years' rule the power of the Jews increased rapidly, for the time was more favorable to the practice of well-calculated policy than to bold resistance and resolute assertion of independence.

The "wise" Simon now became leader, in 143 B. C., and though he was advanced in years, he led and ruled his people with such vigor that he "witnessed the constant growth of freedom and prosperity for which the five brethren, of whom he was now the last survivor, had fought so stoutly for twenty-five years." True to the spirit of unity which always animated the Maccabean family, Simon seized the first opportunity to recover his brother Jonathan's body and bury it with great state in the family burying place at Modin. Then he built a sepulcher, with seven pillars, for his father and mother, four brothers and himself. "But Simon was to raise a nobler monument to the memory of his brethren than the sepulcher at Modin. Far advanced as he was in years, three crowning achievements fell to his lot, which neither of his more stirring brothers had been able to accomplish. There were three strongholds of the Syrian party which after all the successes of Judas and Jonathan had remained in their hands. One was Gezer, the ancient Canaanite fortress in the southwestern plain, which after long vicissitudes had passed into the hands of the Israelites, and now again in these later days had become the chief garrison of the Syrians in the thoroughfare of Philistia. This was attacked with the newly invented Macedonian engine of war, and the terrified inhabitants surrendered at discretion; the images in the temples were cleared out, and a colony of Jews was established there under Simon's son John, now for the first time winning his renown."¹

Next he recovered the famous fortress of Beth-Zur and put in it a strong garrison. Then he starved out the Syrian force in the citadel of Acra, which had for so long been a thorn in the side of the Jewish people. Jerusalem was now freed from the constant menace of a foreign garrison overlooking the very Sanctuary itself, and the memory of the day of deliverance was long and gratefully cherished. "Nothing succeeds like success." The new king of Syria, Demetrius II. (surnamed Nicator), gladly made a treaty of peace with Simon and professed great friendship. Soon after, feeling his strength was decreasing, Simon gave the command of the army to his son John, who afterward succeeded him as head of the nation.

The author of the First Book of Maccabees dilates with great satisfaction on the beneficent results of the wise and kind rule of Simon. "He sought the good of his nation, was honorable in all his acts, liberated captives, took away all uncleanness, enabled the people to till their ground in peace. The ancient men sat in the streets communing together of the wealth of the land; every man sat under his vine and fig tree, and none affrighted them. He strengthened his people who were brought low. The law he searched out and the contemners of the law he rooted out. He beautified the Sanctuary and multiplied the vessels of the temple,"² etc.

This description gives us a picture of what the Jews of those days regarded as an ideal state of national prosperity, and it certainly is one very beautiful to contemplate. In acknowledgment of his great services to his nation, the people wrote his noble deeds on tables of brass and mounted them on pillars in Mount Sion, to be a perpetual memorial to all generations.

Later, when Antiochus Sidetes, successor of Demetrius, passed through Judea on an expedition, he first asked Simon's permission to do so, and in acknowledgment of it granted many immunities, among others the right "to coin money for thy country with thine own stamp,"

¹ Stanley.

² I. Maccabees xiv, 7-15 (condensed).

which in the ancient world was regarded as one of the essential elements of sovereignty. Some of the coins issued by Simon still exist with peaceful emblems on them, as a lily, a wheat sheaf, a palm tree; also short legends in the old Hebrew characters, such as "Jerusalem the Holy" and "Year 4 of the Redemption of Israel."

The treaty made with Rome by Judas and renewed by Jonathan was confirmed by Simon, and the tribes on the frontiers of Judea entered into friendly relations with the wise and powerful Judean prince. In seeking a closer alliance with Rome, Simon adopted the usual course of sending costly presents. Among them was "a great shield of gold of a thousand pounds weight," and it provokes a smile as one reads the Roman acknowledgment of the gift in the condescending language of a powerful state: "It seemed also good to us to receive the shield," etc. Surely it ought to have "seemed" exceedingly "good" to obtain so much gold for the little they ever intended to do for Simon and his people.

After his long life, in which he displayed so much wisdom and won such remarkable success and glory, it is saddening to read of Simon's inglorious end, 135 B. C. "He and his two sons were entrapped by his son-in-law into a drunken supper at the fortress of Dok, near Jericho, and there treacherously murdered." Thus passed away under a dark shadow the last of the five gallant brothers who had suffered so much, fought so bravely, and toiled so nobly for their nation."

"The brightest day may close in fiercest storm,
The noblest life ignobly."

CHAPTER V.

THE SEPTUAGINT.

THE most remarkable literary monument which united Israel with the western world was the translation into the Greek language of the sacred books of the Jews. This translation is now generally known as "The Septuagint." *Septuaginta* is the Latin word for seventy, and a very early tradition, perhaps well founded, declared that seventy or seventy-two translators were engaged on the work. One version of this tradition went so far as to say that there were six translators from each of the twelve tribes; that the seventy-two were shut up, each with a Hebrew Bible and sufficient writing material; and that when their work was done, it proved that all had been miraculously inspired, so that the seventy-two versions were identical in every letter. The dislike of the Samaritans, the suspicion of the Hebrew Jews, and the admiration of the Jews who were scattered through the world, led to three different sets of such traditions regarding the Septuagint.

The general impression has been that the second King Ptolemy, known as Ptolemy Philadelphus, directed this translation. The period was nearly three centuries before Christ, about the year 285 B. C. Ptolemy was an intelligent and humane sovereign, and it is even said that he sent a distinguished embassy to the high priest in Jerusalem to ask for a trustworthy copy of the Law. The embassy was cordially received, and returned with the sacred book. It must be remembered that at this time the Jewish Canon of the Old Testament had been formed and was not very unlike the Canon of our Old Testament of to-day.

The five books of the Pentateuch were those first translated. The Egyptian character of the enterprise is shown from the acquaintance, which is evident, of the translators with Egyptian customs, language, and history. This translation is more faithful, more intelligible and

uniform than that of the later books. The legends which have been spoken of say that the whole Bible was finished in seventy-two days. But in truth, it seems probable that only the Law was translated at first, and that the whole Septuagint was not finished for nearly a hundred and fifty years. It probably existed much as we have it now a century and a half before the Christian era.

From the very first it engaged the attention of philosophers and students through the western world. If Israel were well disposed to study the Greek customs and literature, Greece and Rome, on their side, were taking more and more interest in the faith and philosophy of the East. If it were only in the synagogues or places of prayer established by Jewish bankers or merchants in every commercial city, a copy of their Scriptures in Greek would be received with interest.

It must be remembered that books did not circulate in manuscript as books circulate now. Still it happened that, from the period when the translation of the Pentateuch was finished, step by step, a knowledge of the Old Testament worked its way into the world of African, Roman, and Greek thought. As the Greek philosophers acquainted themselves with Hebrew Scripture, there grew a tendency, which has existed among theological writers from that day to this, to explain difficult passages as allegories. This tendency was very strong in Alexandria, where the habit of making allegories had long existed among the Egyptian priests. In the work of Aristobulus, a Jew of a priestly family who lived in Egypt about one hundred and fifty years before Christ, there may be found what have been called the "earliest and tenderest attempts at connected allegorical explanation." After Aristobulus, Philo, generally called Philo Judæus, lived and wrote in Egypt. His death is later than that of the Savior. His works carry the spirit of allegory, perhaps, as far as it has ever been carried.

The scholarship of Greece and Rome attempted at least a superficial knowledge of the religious writings of the nations who were subdued by Rome. The activity of the literary and poetical habit in Alexandria was such that there grew up a habit of writing Sibylline books, which should bring to the world the religious truth which had been unfolded by the Hebrew prophets. Reference has already been made to the influence of such writings in Rome. Ewald gives to the oldest Sibylline book now preserved the date of 124 B. C., but there are older poems in the same fashion, which do not take this name. The writers of these so-called oracles engaged in open contest with heathenism, hardly hiding their boldness, and the Sibylline books, so-called, became more and more Christian.

Our own interest in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures is greatly increased, because this was the version which seems to have been used by the Savior and his apostles. It would seem as if, in reading in the synagogue, he must have read from Hebrew texts; but in our New Testament the citations made from the Old Testament are always in the language of the Septuagint version.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BOOK OF ENOCH.

ALL careful students of the New Testament have read with curiosity the words in the fourteenth and fifteenth verses of the Epistle of Jude, the last of the epistles of the New Testament. The language is this: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

As no such language is to be found in either of the books of our Old Testament, it was always clear that the writer of the epistle had in hand some Book of Enoch which had been lost. After him, almost all the earlier Church Fathers knew of the book, and some of them made quotations from it. By the diligence of critical students, a considerable number of such quotations were brought together, and in the seventeenth century a manuscript from Ethiopia was produced, which it was hoped would prove to be the real Book of Enoch.

These hopes were disappointed. It was only a miserable production of someone known as Abba Haila Michael. But the famous traveler Bruce, who gave such entertaining accounts of his visits to Egypt and Abyssinia, was more fortunate. Among other prizes which he brought to Europe in 1773 he had three manuscripts in the Ethiopic language, which proved to be so many copies of a translation into that language of the genuine Book of Enoch.¹

There were not many students in Europe who could read the language of these manuscripts. One and another unsuccessful version was published as years went by, but it was not until 1853 that any edition of practical use to general readers appeared. Since that time, the Book of Enoch has been open to intelligent students of the literature to which it belongs. It has been translated into English by Dr. Schodde, of Columbus, Ohio.

It is interesting to us because it is a good type of the Jewish literature of the latter part of the period between Malachi and Matthew. It is generally acknowledged that it was written either in Hebrew or in Aramaic, the language of Palestine at that time. From internal evidence, it is determined that it was written before the year 160 B. C.

It may be said that the central object of the author is to express his horror at the gradual falling away of the aristocratic class among his countrymen. He bewails their neglect of the God of Israel and of the old religious observances of Israel under the temptations which beset courtiers in all times, especially those which surrounded them, as princes of Greek training and merchants with Greek ideas became more and more powerful in Israel. The denunciation which is copied in the Epistle of Jude is one of the expressions of indignation.

In expressing this indignation, he brings together a series of parables which definitely express the hope of the Messiah, as it was entertained by the conservative Jews of his time. Dr. Schodde condenses the writer's remarks concerning the person of the Messiah in these

¹The traveler Bruce was the Scotch gentleman who should be remembered by the anecdote told of him by Sir Walter Scott. After his return from Africa, he was a guest at a large dinner party in Scotland. One of the other guests was rash enough to ridicule his statement that the Abyssinians ate raw beef, and said that it was impossible; that this was a "traveler's story." Bruce soon after left the table, but he returned with a slice of raw beef, which he had brought on a plate from the kitchen. He gave this to the careless critic, saying, "You will eat this beef or you will fight me." The critic ate it, accordingly.

words: "It is stated that before the sun, and the signs, and the stars were made, his name had been called before the Lord of the spirits: and that he was chosen and hidden before the world was created, but preserved and revealed to the just. It is further stated that he had arisen and appeared or was revealed." Dr. Schodde supposes that the author does not mean to teach simply a predestination of the Messiah, but his existence before the world was made. It is clear that Enoch's description of the Messiah is largely based on the words of Isaiah and Micah. He is regarded as superhuman, but he is far from being equal to God. The author regards him as a servant of God, chosen by God for his special work and as his deputy. Divine honor is never bestowed on him, but in him the old Jewish idea of royalty is made real, namely, that the earthly king reigns as the viceroy of God to carry out his law. It ought to be said, once for all, that though the author takes the name of the patriarch Enoch, and in one and another place in his book connects what he writes with mysterious references to the patriarch Enoch in the Old Testament, yet there is scarcely any pretense that the patriarch is really the author. The writer and the reader alike understand that here is a series of visions, applicable to the conditions of the time and place when the poem is written.

For us, the chief interest of the book which was so long hidden is in its conception of the Messiah, as a devout Jew hoped for him, a century and a half before the time of our Savior, and in the fanciful but poetical notions with regard to natural phenomena which appear in it. After the introduction, there is a long and involved account of that rebellion of the angels which plays so important a part in Milton's poem of "Paradise Lost." In the second part, which the critics suppose to have an author different from him who wrote the first, in the second of two elaborate parables comes the prophetic description of the Son of Man:

"This is the Son of Man, who has justice, and justice dwells with him.

"And he reveals all secret treasures, because the Lord of spirits chose him, and by the eternal law he has the right to overcome all things before the Lord of spirits.

"And this Son of Man will rouse from their couches the kings and the rulers, and will throw down the strong from their thrones, and will loosen the bands of the strong, and will break the teeth of the sinners.

"And he will drive the kings from their thrones and from their kingdoms, because they do not exalt him, and do not give him the praise, they do not own that he gave to them the kingdom."

In another passage, he says of the Son of Man:

"He will be a staff to the just and the holy, on which they will stay themselves so that they shall not fall: he will be the light of the nations and the hope of those who are sick at heart.

"All who live upon the earth will fall down before him, and to him will they bow the knee: they will bless him and praise him, and sing psalms to the name of the Lord of the spirits."

The description of the various powers of nature is evidently one of the passages in which the author most delighted. It is a revelation in which different angels explain the hidden origin of the movements of nature. It is all somewhat as in "Paradise Lost," where the angel Raphael explains to Adam and Eve some kindred secrets of the physical world. Thus the courses of the sun and moon, the laws of thunder and lightning, the movement of the sea, the wonders of hoarfrost, of snow, of fog, of dew, and of rain are referred to the spirit which rules over each phenomenon. And the reader is reminded that the waters "are for those who live on the earth; for they are the nourishment for the earth from the Most High, who is in heaven; therefore, rain has its measure, and the angels receive it."

Some extracts from chapter lx of Dr. Schodde's translation will give to our readers an idea of the way in which the supposed revelations to Enoch were made.

It was "in the year 500, and in the seventh month, on the fourteenth day of the month, of the life of Enoch.

"In that parable I saw that the heaven of heavens shook tremendously, and the host of the Most High and the angels, a thousand times a thousand and ten thousand times ten thousand, were disturbed

exceedingly. And then I saw the Head of Days sitting upon the throne of his glory, and the angels and the just ones stood around him, and a great trembling took hold of me, and fear seized me ; my loins were bent and were loosened and my whole being melted together, and I fell down on my face."

With this beginning, we have a revelation made to him by the Holy Michael, who is the Archangel Michael often referred to in the mythology of the Jews after they returned from Babylon. The reader will remember that Milton has adopted the name as the name of one of the archangels who appear in "Paradise Lost."

The first revelation made to him is that to which allusion has been made, as to the powers of nature :

"Then the other angel, who went with me, spoke to me, and showed me that which was secret, the first and the last, what is in the heavens on high, and in the earth in the deep, and in the ends of the heavens, and on the foundations of heaven, and in the repositories of the winds ; and how the spirits are divided, and how weighing is done, and how the fountains and the winds are counted according to the power of the spirit, and the power of the lights of the moon, and that it is a power of justice, and the divisions of the stars according to their names, and how each division is divided ; and peals of thunder according to the places where they fall, and all the divisions that are made among the flashes of lightning, that lightning may take place, and their hosts obey. For the thunder has places of rest for the awaiting of its peal, and thunder and lightning are inseparable, and although not one, both go together through the spirit and are not separated. For when the lightning flashes, the thunder utters its voice, and the spirit causes a rest during the flash, and divides equally between them, for the treasury of their flashes is like the sand ; and each one of them, in its flash, is held with a bridle, and turned back by the power of the spirit, and is pushed forward, according to the number of the directions of the earth. And the spirit of the sea is masculine and strong, and according to the strength of his power he draws it [*i. e.*, the sea] back with a bridle, and in like manner it is pushed forward, and scattered in all the mountains of the earth. And the spirit of the hoarfrost is his *own* angel, and the spirit of hail is a good angel. And he has let go the spirit of the snow on account of its strength, and it has a special spirit, and that which ascends from it is like smoke, and its name is frost. And the spirit of the fog is not joined with them in their repository, but it has a special repository, for its course is in clearness and in light and in darkness, and in winter and in summer, and its repository is the light, and it [*i. e.*, the spirit] is its angel. And the spirit of the dew has its dwelling-place at the ends of the heaven, and is connected with the repository of the rain, and its course is in winter and in summer ; and its clouds and the clouds of the fog are connected, and one gives to the other. And when the spirit of rain moves out of its repository the angels come and open the repository, and lead it out, and when it is scattered over all the earth, and also as often as it is joined to the waters of the earth. For the waters are for those who live on the earth ; for they are the nourishment for the earth from the Most High, who is in heaven ; therefore, rain has its measure, and the angels receive it."

The various revelations go on, in detail which it is not necessary to follow. In the sixty-ninth chapter is a sort of history of the twenty-one disobedient angels, whose fall fills an important place in the records which have been alluded to. In addition to these twenty-one angels, there are the names of their centurions and captains of fifty and captains of ten. Perhaps the most interesting to us of these is the fourth. He is called Pēnēmū.

"He taught the sons of men the bitter and the sweet, and taught them all the secrets of their wisdom. He taught men writing with ink and paper, and thereby many sinned from eternity to eternity and up to this day. For men were not born to the purpose that they should thus strengthen their fidelity with a pen and with ink ; for man was not created otherwise than the angels, to remain just and pure. And death, which destroys all things, would not have touched him. But through this knowledge men are devoured, and through this power it devours me."

From these histories of the angels and their officers, the book passes to a certain astronomical treatise, and there is a curious account given of the course of the year and of the reason why days are shorter in winter and longer in summer. The division of the year into months is made, and we have such statements of the gradual lengthening of the days as this :

"When the sun arises from the heaven, he comes out of that fourth portal for thirty mornings, and descends directly into the fourth western portal of heaven ; and in those days the day is daily lengthened

and the night nightly shortened till the thirtieth morning ; and the day is two parts longer than the night, and the day is exactly ten parts and the night eight parts."

The next book of this astronomical treatise refers to the moon, and a somewhat similar account is given of the moon, with a curious astronomical discussion, quite accurate in its character, of the way by which the lunar calendar and the solar calendar of months and years may be wrought in with each other.

These somewhat mysterious astronomical statements are intermingled or concluded with definite moral instruction. The fifteenth section of Dr. Schodde's book ends with a chapter in which Enoch gives this instruction to his son Methusaleh :

"Wisdom I have given thee and thy children and those who will be thy children, that they give it to their children the generations to eternity, this wisdom which is above their thoughts. Those who understand it will not sleep, but will hear with their ears, that they may learn this wisdom ; and it will please those who eat of it more than good food.

"Happy are all the just, happy are all those who walk in the paths of justice and have no sin like the sinners in the counting of all their days in which the sun goes through the heavens, entering and departing from the gates, each time thirty times, together with the heads of the thousands of this order of the stars, together with the four that are added and separate between the four portions of the year, which they lead and enter with them four days."

In one of the subsequent divisions, a history of the world is given, from the beginning to its conversion in Messianic times. The men of Israel are symbolized as tame animals ; the patriarchs are bullocks and the faithful are the sheep. Those who are not the people of God and who are the enemies of Israel are spoken of as wild beasts and vultures. The nations are herds, and their leaders are prominent members of such herds. The account itself is based chiefly on the Old Testament records. In the very end of this history, as in the somewhat similar passages in the Book of Daniel, the greater leaders are referred to as so many horns. The book, having thus foretold the condition of things which surrounds the author, closes by an exhortation to those who read it as to the way in which they shall prepare to meet these contingencies. Here, indeed, is the object with which the whole book has been written. Enoch has given his children an account of the events to come, and instructs them in their conduct in preparation for those events. What he has told is applied in the way of admonition, warning, and instruction.

As what may be called a briefer introduction to the warnings, he reviews the history of the world in ten world-weeks, which are each of seven days, so that the history of the world is divided into seventy heads. Of these, forty-nine belong to history and twenty-one to prophecy. The seventh is the week in which the author lived — a rebellious age ; rebellious, that is, against God and God's laws.

The exhortations which follow are intended principally for the faithful. He warns the Israelites against the perversions which come upon them from Greek language, ideas, and manners. Those who have given way to these foreign temptations will be punished. They must not rely upon wealth ; they must rely on God.

But even in their persecutions they are to hope, for a change is sure to come.

"O that my eyes were clouds of water, and I could weep over you and pour out my tears like a cloud of water, and I could rest from the sorrow of my heart !

"But ye who are just, hope ye, for the sinner will be destroyed suddenly before you, and the power over them will be to you, as ye desire.

"In the day of the trouble of the sinners, your children will mount and rise like eagles, and your nest will be higher than the hawk, and you will ascend and go like the squirrels into the recesses of the earth and into the clefts of the rock to eternity before the unjust. But they will lament over you and cry as the satyrs cry.

"Woe to you who practice injustice, and destruction, and reviling ; you will be remembered for your evil. Woe to you who are strong, who throw down the just by your power, for the day of your destruction

will come. In those times many and good days will come to the just, but it shall be on the day of your judgment."

The book closes with what the critics consider to be an addition by a later hand, describing the birth of the son of the prophet, to whom these instructions had been given.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM 135 TO 63 B. C.—THE LAST YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE.

ONE of Simon's sons, John Hyrcanus, was not with his father when he was entrapped and slain, though the assassins did all in their power to destroy him. This was in vain, however, for a faithful messenger ran to Gezer to warn him of his danger and Hyrcanus prepared to defend himself to the last. He was successful not only in preserving his own life, but also in seizing those who came to kill him and putting them to death. Immediately afterward he went to Jerusalem and was proclaimed high priest and ruler of the country.

John inherited the ability and vigor characteristic of his family, and he needed it, for he was no sooner accepted leader than he had to devise means to withstand another Syrian invasion. He and his people were besieged in Jerusalem and speedily reduced to great extremity by famine. At last he was compelled by sheer necessity to expel from the city the young and old of both sexes who could do nothing to defend the city. It was greatly to the credit of the Syrian king, Antiochus Sidetes, that, in the extreme distress of the Jews, he conceded a week's truce, and not only so, but "furnished the besieged with victims for sacrifice, and gold and silver vessels for the temple service during the Feast of Tabernacles." He was gratefully compared with his impious ancestor, Antiochus Epiphanes, and called Antiochus the Pious. Finally he concluded a peace, of which the terms, though hard, were better than Hyrcanus, in the low condition to which he was reduced, could fairly expect. John agreed to pay tribute for Joppa, Gezer, and other border towns held by grants from the previous Syrian kings; but he stoutly refused to admit a garrison into Jerusalem, and succeeded in carrying his point, though he had to give 500 talents instead and to furnish hostages as security for his fidelity to the agreement.

For the next twenty-five years Hyrcanus gradually grew stronger, and his people more prosperous. The friendly king of Syria, Antiochus Sidetes, died in battle in 129 B. C., and in three years three kings succeeded to the throne. They were not powerful monarchs, and as Syria grew weaker, Judea became more independent. "In the double and divided duties which devolved upon him John Hyrcanus was perhaps more knight than priest, more just than merciful. He made short work with his foes, whether native or foreign." True to the puritan instincts of his ancestors, he abominated mongrel Judaism, and being at peace with all foreign powers he turned his attention to the unorthodox Samaritans. He told them plainly that they must either be one thing or the other, and finding them obstinate he razed to the ground their rival temple on Gerizim and totally destroyed the Greek city of Samaria. This was harsh dealing, but doubtless Hyrcanus was prompted by religious zeal, and we know that his subjects enthusiastically approved his actions.

Hyrcanus then proceeded to "convert" the Edomites. They had often been hostile to the Jews, and doubtless the memory of this stirred Hyrcanus to devise thorough measures. He subjugated the country and forced the Edomites to adopt circumcision and the whole system of the Jewish religion. So it is "even until this day." Those who denounce as tyranny all interference with their own religious convictions are often the first and fiercest in thrusting

their notions on others. As Luther said, "Every man is at heart a pope," though he may never even have heard of Rome.

In the twenty-sixth year of his reign Hyrcanus annexed all Samaria and Galilee, and inflicted two severe defeats on the Syrians when they interfered with his operations. Thus he became practically an independent sovereign; and so when fifty years had passed after the death of Judas Maccabæus, the summit of Jewish prosperity was gained under the strong and wise rule of his nephew. The borders of the land had been gradually extended until the Jewish possessions were five times as great as in the days of Judas. The neighboring tribes had been conquered and the valuable port of Joppa won for purposes of trade. The alliance with the Romans had been carefully maintained, and eventually a new treaty, offensive and defensive, was made against their common enemies.

So far all had gone well with John Hyrcanus; but the special talent of the Jews for raising dissensions had not been altogether neglected. When united they had prospered, and though it was by long and hard fighting they had at last won the liberty they craved so much. When they lost it, it was not because of foreign foes, but because of their own quarrelsome dispositions and their incapacity for freedom.

Notwithstanding his zeal for the purity of the national religion, Hyrcanus did not maintain the observance of the innumerable regulations which the rigid Pharisees had imposed on the nation. This laxity was unpardonable, and so they managed to make his last years very unhappy. This quarrel of the Pharisees with the ruling family—the Maccabees—ended in the overthrow of that noble house, and eventually in the destruction of the Jewish nation. For thirty-one years Hyrcanus carried on the government with great vigor and ability. In the year 106 B. C. he died, and his name was cherished with reverent affection as the last great ruler of his people.

From 106 to 63 B. C.—The story of the decline of the Jewish nation is a melancholy record of ruinous infatuation and wasted energy.

It appears that John Hyrcanus knew of the incapacity of his sons and of the feud between them. He did his best to prevent dissension by appointing his son, Aristobulus I., to the office of high priest, and leaving the civil supremacy to his wife, the mother of his five sons.

This arrangement did not suit the ambitious nature of Aristobulus; so he imprisoned his mother and three of his brothers and proclaimed himself king. Soon afterward he made a successful expedition and subdued Iturea. His favorite brother, Antigonus, was associated with him in this campaign, but on his return to Jerusalem Aristobulus wrongfully suspected Antigonus of treachery and put him to death. Subsequently he made the discovery that his brother was really innocent, which caused him to be "seized with such agony and remorse that he expired." He was a degenerate son of a noble house, and no doubt it was a fortunate thing for his people that he died in less than a year after he had usurped the throne.

Alexander Jannæus, his brother, succeeded him and reigned twenty-seven years. The hostility sown between his father and the Pharisees continued all through his reign. In addition to wars on his frontier, there was much rioting between the factions in Jerusalem, so that although he was brave and energetic, he was not a successful ruler.

Alexander belonged to the party of the Sadducees; and the Pharisees seemed determined to do all they could to keep up the contention between themselves and their prince. Once they insulted him in the temple while he was officiating, and denied his right to the priesthood. This was more than Alexander could bear: he at once commanded his troops to fall on the Pharisees and their supporters, an order which resulted in the death of six thousand persons. This crushed the opposition only for a time, for soon afterward, while he was gone on an expedition to the east of the Jordan, the Jews rose in rebellion, and for six years the country was involved in a bitter civil war. Finally Alexander was successful, but he felt sure there would

be trouble in the future. On his deathbed he admitted that he had been mistaken in alienating the Pharisees from him, and urged his wife to conciliate them.

In 79 B. C. Alexander died, and his widow Alexandra took charge of the national affairs. She immediately adopted the policy her husband had advised, which was rendered more easy by the fact that her brother Simon, a man of great influence, was a Pharisee. To the credit of the Pharisees it must be acknowledged that they proved wise counselors and staunch friends to the widowed queen, and for the nine years of her reign the country was prosperous and at peace. Her two sons, Hyrcanus II. and Aristobulus II., assisted in the business of the nation; the quiet Hyrcanus was made high priest, and the active Aristobulus occupied himself with civil and military affairs.

Alexandra died in 70 B. C., and her two sons began at once to quarrel. The Pharisees supported Hyrcanus, and the priestly section of the Sadducees took the side of Aristobulus. The army, too, chose to follow the vigorous and enterprising Aristobulus. This action enabled him to defeat his brother's forces and occupy Jerusalem. At length Hyrcanus consented to give up the sovereignty and for a short period he retired into private life. After a while the contest broke out again, chiefly through the ambition and craft of Antipater, the son of the governor of Idumea, who wished to play off one brother against the other until he could find the opportunity to seize their country for himself. The feud raged fiercely for several years, and then, in an evil hour, they asked Pompey, the Roman general who at that time was in Syria, to arbitrate the case and decide who should be the ruler of Judea. Pompey consented to do so, but he took so long time to make up his mind that Aristobulus grew tired of waiting, and went off and prepared to maintain his own cause. This induced Pompey to take the matter entirely into his own hands. He advanced against Jerusalem, captured it after a three-months' siege, declared all the possessions of Aristobulus to be forfeit to Rome, and established Hyrcanus as high priest and ethnarch of Judea.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PREPARATION FOR CHRIST.

IT was sixty-three years before the Christian era, when the Jewish nation thus yielded to the imperial power of Rome. Pompey, already called the Great, arrived in Palestine, under circumstances which give to the Roman conquest of the stubborn province the most dramatic aspect. Pompey is himself a person whose character especially interests modern readers among the rough fighters of his time. He attained power and popularity in Rome at a very early period of his life. At the time when he entered Jerusalem he was but forty-three years old. He had then twice enjoyed the unusual honor of a triumph, entering Rome in solemn and grand processions, after signal victories over the enemies of the republic.

Three years before his appearance in Palestine he had been intrusted with the management of the very difficult campaigns against Mithridates. All the land and naval forces of Rome, in the eastern part of the Roman dominion, had been placed under his command, with the summary authority of a proconsul in all Asia as far as Armenia — which was quite as far, indeed, as Rome pretended to hold sway, or, in fact, knew even the names of rulers or of people. Pompey crushed Mithridates — and, with him, the power of the East — in the next four years. It is in the last of these that he appears in the Holy Land, having left the Roman legions, at

the extreme east, under the care of Scaurus. It has been supposed that Pompey was attracted to Palestine and Jerusalem by a sort of religious interest in this mysterious nation, which alone, of all people, worshiped a God of whom no image could be made.

The contending factions among the Jews knew he was irresistible, as indeed he was. When, therefore, the two brothers, Aristobulus and Hyrcanus II., appealed to him, they made every effort to conciliate him. Aristobulus brought a magnificent offering wrought from gold, at the cost of 500 talents.¹ It was called "The Delight," and is sometimes described as a golden vine, sometimes as a golden garden. For at least one hundred years it was preserved in the temple of Jupiter of the Capitol at Rome, having been borne there among the various offerings of Pompey's third and most wonderful triumph. It was seen there by Strabo and Josephus. Hyrcanus, who was the competitor of Aristobulus for the rule of the land, represented the rival party. Brother appeared against brother—Hyrcanus, the high priest, against Aristobulus, the king. Pompey heard the complaints of each party, condemned Aristobulus for his violence, but sent both away until he could come to their country again. He advised them, first of all, to keep the peace with each other. For himself he had a campaign at hand against the Nabatheans, and he bade Aristobulus and Hyrcanus wait his return from it.

Aristobulus obeyed neither the letter nor the spirit of this command. Pompey found that he was disposed to be rebellious, abandoned his movement against the Nabatheans and moved his army into Palestine itself. Encamping at Jericho, then still beautiful with its palm trees, he and his army there received with joy the great news of the death of Mithridates. Pompey's conquest of Asia, as they called the west of Africa, was, therefore, complete. And now he moved upon Jerusalem.

Now began another of those terrible sieges which have recurred so often in the history of the Holy City. The party of Hyrcanus surrendered their part of the city to the Romans. The party of Aristobulus obstinately defended theirs. The whole power of the Roman army was needed to storm the walls. And when the Roman army took possession it was only after the most terrible slaughter of the Jews. The Jewish historian says that twelve thousand of them were killed.

The same observance of the sabbath by the besieged marked this contest as was noticed in other sieges. The Romans observed this, and, on the sabbath days, while "they came to no pitched battle with the Jews," they did raise the banks of earth from which their engines were to work, and perfected their batteries by which they made the attack which opened the breach for their assault.

When the temple was captured Pompey entered it. He came to the Holy of Holies, of which he knew the sacredness, that no one but the high priest of the whole nation could enter there, and he only once a year.² Roman-like, with the whole strength of Rome behind him, the great commander passed through the temple courts to the sacred shrine. He lifted the sacred veil. He entered the Holy of Holies. There was nothing there.

Pompey learned his lesson, if he needed it, that he who made the world and all that is therein, dwells not in temples made with hands.

With justice, dignity and firmness, such as distinguished Pompey often, if not always, he adjusted for the time, at least, the dissensions among the Jews. Aristobulus, the elder brother, had, of course, lost all hope of Roman favor by mad resistance to the Roman arms. Hyrcanus received the honor and danger of the priesthood, for which the two had contended. It was remembered and recorded, that, the day after Pompey entered the temple, he gave orders that it should be purified, for he knew that his presence in the shrine had contaminated it to Jewish eyes. He took none of the golden ornaments of the temple from their sacred uses.

¹ The Greek talent may be roughly estimated at \$1,000 of our money.

² Leviticus xvi.

He gave order that the chiefs of the insurrection should be beheaded. He tried to bring back to the limits of Judah all of Jewish blood; and, from that time, the south of Palestine takes the name of Judea. The province included the region formerly held by the tribes of Judah and of Benjamin. He restored the independence of the towns on the coast and those beyond the Jordan. He undid, in short, all that the courage and statesmanship of the Maccabean princes had done for their people. Josephus, the Jewish historian of these events, says sadly, that in consequence of the feud between Aristobulus and Hyrcanus "we lost our liberty, and became subject to the Romans, and were deprived of that country which we had gained by our arms from the Syrians, and were compelled to restore it to the Syrians."

Pompey returned to Rome, and, in a pageant of two days, received the honors of his third triumph. Among the magnificent spoils exhibited was the golden vine which Aristobulus had given to him. Large numbers of Jewish captives were in the train of prisoners. These men, with their wives and children, made up the colony of Jews in the city of Rome, which was now known there for the first time. It was planted where the Jewish settlement called the "Ghetto," a name derived from the name of Egypt, still exists, and has been inhabited by Jews from that day to this. Aristobulus II., the king of the Jews, was among the prisoners. Cicero, in writing to Atticus at the time, calls Pompey "our hero of Jerusalem."

Rome had touched Jerusalem, and now the literature and religion of the Holy Land, from this time forward, begin to show themselves in Roman life and literature, as they had not appeared before. Whatever sparks of imagination or of faith were smothered beneath the hard organization of Roman life were quickened by the new breath from the East until they burned. The poet Virgil was six years old when the great triumph brought the Jews into the notice of the city of Rome. When he went to Rome as a young man, the literary men of Rome had already tasted at the Jewish fountain. We have cited the passage in the eclogue addressed to Pollio, which is so curious a parallel to the well-known lines of Isaiah.

The poet Horace was a baby two years old at the time of the triumph. But, by the time he was a man, in Rome, notions of the sabbath and of the order of the Jewish calendar were so well understood that he introduces them in one of his joking satires. He is trying to free himself from an importunate bore in the street: "I know, but I will speak another time. This is the thirtieth sabbath—would you wish to affront these Jews?" The week of the Passover is the thirtieth week of the Jewish year, and in that week no secular business could be transacted. Horace already knew as nice a detail as this of Hebrew customs.

The Sibylline books, in the oriental forms, were beginning to appear in Rome. They are full of suggestions of the Old Testament Scripture. Thus is it that, as Dean Stanley says, "Pompey was, although he knew it not, the founder of the Roman Church."

The aged Simeon, who was in the temple when Jesus Christ was presented there, and Anna the prophetess, were old enough to have seen and remembered Pompey in Jerusalem. At the time when he met Aristobulus and Hyrcanus at Damascus, Herod, afterward called the Great, was seven years old. He was the King Herod referred to in the first chapter of Matthew. The history of his eventful life connects the story of the Jews, after their dependence upon Rome, with the story of newborn Christianity.

The father of Herod was Antipater of Edom—that Edom which was so often spoken of with hatred by the Old Testament writers—the Edom of Ishmael and of a hundred roving tribes, against which Israel had to give her children for battle. In the Roman language Edom was called Idumæa, and Antipater is spoken of in the histories as Antipater the Idumean. He married Cypros, a princess of Arabia,—so that from his father and from his mother Herod the Great inherited the genius of Ishmael and the Ishmaelite tribes.

John Hyrcanus had brought these wild Edomites into subjection, and had appointed as their governor Herod's grandfather. This grandfather was named Antipas, according to

Josephus; according to Eusebius, Herod. After the Edomites had been subdued by John Hyrcanus he appointed this man to be governor of the conquered country. His influence with Pompey was one of the causes which favored Hyrcanus II. in Pompey's decision between him and Aristobulus II.

Herod showed, when he was a boy, the beauty of person, the strength of will, and the extraordinary ability for command, which gave him such power through his life. He was only fifteen years old when his father appointed him to the command of Galilee. Galilee was then a home of robbers, and the boy governor—himself a bold hunter and afraid of nothing—used all the power at his command in repressing them. His fame outran the limits of the province.

The first mention made in history of the council of the Sanhedrim, spoken of as "the Seventy" in the New Testament,¹ is of the occasion when it met for the trial of the young Herod, who had been summoned to answer for charges of cruelty in suppressing this rebellion. He had provided himself with letters of commendation from Sextus Cæsar, who was the Roman governor of all Syria. Josephus tells us that the Sanhedrim was ready to sentence Herod to death, and to defy Cæsar. Hyrcanus saw that their decision was made, and counselled the young Herod to escape from the city. Herod took the advice, and in the night retired and retreated to Damascus. The Seventy thus lost their last opportunity. He probably afterward regarded this moment as the most critical of his life.

He had escaped imprisonment and death at the hands of the Sanhedrim. But, year by year, the clouds gathered darker and darker around him. Aristobulus sought the alliance of the king of Parthia, the name of the great Eastern empire. We retain its name in our word, "Persia." By false or fair means Aristobulus induced Herod's friends Hyrcanus and Chasad to trust themselves to him. Herod, with his household and his nearest friend, retired to the palace fortress of Masada, which had been prepared for such a purpose in the wilderness of the Dead Sea.

The ruins of Masada still astonish the traveler. It was rediscovered in our time by Messrs. Robinson and Smith, who saw the ruins from a distance in 1842. Mr. Wolcott, an American missionary, with Mr. Tipping, an English painter, afterward scaled the plateau of Masada and verified the exactness of the conjecture of Messrs. Robinson and Smith. In 1848 Captain Lynch, in the American expedition, visited the ruins. The foundations of Herod's palace can still be made out. At each corner was a tower, a hundred feet in height. The apartments, porticos, and baths were various and sumptuous. Great cisterns had been cut in the rock to keep water, so as to furnish a constant supply. A covered road led from the palace to the highest point of the fortress.

The critical period of the history of Masada is nearly a hundred years after Herod retired here. It was then that the last wreck of the Jewish nation, besieged by the Romans, destroyed the palace by fire, and to the number of nine hundred and sixty died in the flames. They chose by lot ten of their number, on whom devolved the terrible duty of killing all the rest. These men accomplished their work without flinching, and when it was over, in their turn designated by lot him who should kill the nine others, and destroy himself by his own hand. The last survivor examined all the bodies stretched about him, then set fire to the palace and ran his sword through his own body. This story, well authenticated, is the terrible close of the history of this fortress.

To return to Herod. He still had competitors for the rule of Judea. All the teaching body was against him; they followed Antigonus. Herod found that even Masada was not secure. He was obliged to take the great risk of all, and to appeal to Rome. He passed through Petra and Alexandria to Rome, and placed his cause in the hands of his old friend Antony.

¹ Luke x, 1, 17.

"Personal presence moves the world," it is said. Certainly it was so then. Antony introduced him to the Roman senate, the proud assembly which made and unmade kings. He had come as the advocate of Aristobulus II. He left the senate chamber with the title by which the world of our time knows him, "King of the Jews"—the first king to bear that title since the downfall of the ill-fated Zedekiah. Antony, and Octavianus, the Augustus of the Book of Luke, concurred in giving to him his title and the iniquity it proclaimed. With the assistance of Sosius, the Roman general, he stormed Jerusalem. He entered it on the same day of the year in which Pompey had entered it twenty-five years before. And on this occasion he won the regard, which afterward he never seemed to merit or even to care for. He bought off the Roman soldiers from the luxury of ravage. "The whole world would not pay me for the destruction of my subjects."

But while he could affect mercy for his subjects, he was pitiless toward his enemies. He pursued them to death with terrible vengeance. Of the Sanhedrim, which has been referred to, it is said that Abtalion, Shemaiah, and the son of Babas were the only three who escaped. Antigonus was seized and executed, and with him the dynasty of the Maccabees, which is called the Asmonean dynasty in history, ends. But the family was not extinct. Hyrcanus, Herod's friend, and the two children of Aristobulus, survived. Herod recalled Hyrcanus from Babylon, where he was in an honorable retreat, and gave to him every dignity, excepting that of the high-priesthood. From this he was debarred because Antigonus had bitten his ear with the express purpose of giving him a physical blemish, which should make him unable to hold that highest place in the priesthood.

Herod married Mariamne. This princess, celebrated in literature and history, was one of the most attractive women who ever lived. It is her name, more than the name of Miriam, the sister of Moses, which made Mary to be a name so frequent and so fond in the Palestine of our Savior's time.

For Aristobulus III., Herod had another fate. He pretended courtesy to him, and at last affected to give him the priesthood, which he had given to Hananel. Alexandra, the mother of Aristobulus III., distrusted such favor, and proposed to flee to Egypt with him. This plot of hers determined Herod to kill the young man. He received him at Jericho, which has been called the fashionable watering-place of Palestine, and welcomed him with sportive regard. The young man, with his companions, plunged into the bath in the sultry noonday, and then, at Herod's command, the soldiers from Gaul who were his body-guard, seized Aristobulus, held him under water, and killed him. Such a murder, so terrible, was but an illustration of Herod's jealousy, and of his method of rule. Not long after, he tried and convicted Hyrcanus II., who was executed at the age of eighty.

Such were the horrors of the court that the members of Herod's family and of his wife's family had to be kept asunder. Herod's mother and sister lived in his magnificent Masada, his wife and her mother lived in Alexandrium, the ancient residence of his race. It may well be understood that Mariamne could not look with much favor upon a husband who had murdered her father and her brother. Her turn came next. "She went to her execution with unmoved countenance, with unchanged color, and died, as she had lived, a true Maccabee." Herod, after he had killed her, pretended terrible remorse. His servants were instructed to address her as if she were still alive. Attacked by fever, it seemed as if he must die; but he recovered to work new terrors his life long.

It is from such a life that the bitter comment of the emperor Augustus takes its sting. Augustus, who was his patron, said, "I had rather be Herod's hog than his son." He meant that, while the Jewish rule prevented Herod from killing a hog for food, it did not hold him back from the murder of his own children. In his passionate regret for Mariamne, Herod sent Alexander and Aristobulus, her sons, to Rome. Here they were educated in the household of

Pollio, the friend of Virgil, to whom he addressed his Fourth Eclogue. They came back to Palestine with the graces of Roman education, and with that dignity which belonged to their ancestors. Herod proposed for Alexander a marriage with the daughter of the king of Cappadocia; for his brother a marriage with the daughter of Salome. Here the feuds of the rival families would perhaps have been brought to an end; but the young men remembered their mother. They lost no occasion of showing their regard for her, and their hatred of their father. It was easy to call up testimony of their treasonable utterances, and when Antipater, Herod's son by his first marriage, saw it well to destroy his father's interest in them, he and Salome succeeded, and the young men were executed in Sebaste, where their mother was married. Herod Agrippa and Herodias, whom we know in the gospels, were their children. With them ends the history of the Asmonean dynasty. Stanley remarks that the four names which seem to have been favorite names in Judea at the time of our gospels—John, Judas, Simon, and Matthias—are all names in the Maccabean family.

The years of Herod's reign cover nearly half a century—the half-century, roughly speaking, which precedes the birth of the Savior. It would be safe to say that, but for the birth of Christ, Herod's name would not be known to modern readers except as the name of Mithridates is known, or of Antiochus, or any other successful ruler of the East, who came under the sway of the Roman empire. But in truth, the Judea of the Savior's time is Judea as this great ruler had fashioned it, and though we pass by his name almost indifferently in history till we come to the beginning of the Book of Matthew, in his time, for the southwest of Asia, Herod was a ruler who may be compared to the first Napoleon in the first fifteen years of this nineteenth century. The physical mark which Herod made upon Syria was greater than any physical memories which Napoleon left in France. Not simply temples and palaces, but whole cities, were the monuments of his wealth and his determination. The pages of Josephus are red with the accounts of his murders—murders, in many instances, of those nearest to him in his family. But the traveler in Syria to-day finds an unwritten history in the ruins and in the edifices not in ruin, which show how vast were the resources, and how bold the enterprise, of this remarkable man. As it happens, we have fuller record of his history in the two books of Josephus—one called the “Wars of the Jews” and the other “The Antiquities of the Jews”—than we have of any other of the great sovereigns whose kingdoms were absorbed by the growing empire of Rome.

It is thus that the life of Herod has won for itself a place in modern literature. More than two centuries ago, an English lady, with that dramatic power which seems to have belonged to the era of Shakespeare, wrote a tragedy called “*Mariam, the Faire Queen of Jewry*,” which was published in the year 1613. This was the Lady Elizabeth Carew.

Voltaire's play of “*Mariamne*” is perhaps as good an illustration of his dramatic genius as survives.

Of the marvelous works of architecture which are connected with this history, the new temple at Jerusalem was, for every reason, the most important. It was Herod's first affair to conciliate, as best he might, the passionate reverence of the Jews for their ancient religion, for the law, the ritual, and the history which had made them great, and of which, now for more than a thousand years, the center had been at Jerusalem. The temple where this ritual was carried out was still the simple temple which Nehemiah and Ezra, with countless difficulties, had built, on the return of the scattered fragment of the tribes from exile. The history of that temple covers the period between the Book of Malachi and the Book of Matthew, which we have been trying to illustrate, and which seems so mysterious to young readers of the Bible. As soon as Herod was well seated on his throne, he made it his pleasure and his duty to rebuild this ancient temple with such wealth and grandeur as should make it, what, indeed, it became, one of the wonders of the world.

It is said that the Emperor Augustus advised him against such an undertaking. The policy of Augustus, perhaps, had less regard for the past than for the future. He is said to have remarked to Herod, "If the old building is not destroyed, do not destroy it. If it is destroyed, do not rebuild it. If you both destroy and rebuild, you are a foolish servant."

This is the statement of the Talmud, never to be relied upon for literal accuracy. But it is "well imagined," even if it be not literally true. Herod availed himself, however, of that fiction which is so easy—he pretended to repair a breach in the old building; and as he built, the worship of the old temple was never interrupted. In the narrative in the second chapter of John, the priests in the temple are said to have exclaimed that it required forty-six years to build it. Stanley estimates these forty-six years as running between the year 17 B. C. of our calendar and the year 28 A. D., a little before the Passion Week, when the words were spoken.¹

The execution of the two young princes took place at Sebaste, the city which we know as Sychar, in the year marked in the calendar as the sixth before Christ. The Herod who killed John the Baptist, and the Herod before whom Paul appears, represent the same family, but the Herod called the Great was the last king of the Jews. It has been well suggested that when the Savior said "A house divided against itself cannot stand," he had in mind the divisions and fall of the noble family of the Maccabean heroes. It is important for us to remember how much that great family did for the Jewish people.

When Mattathias lifted his aged hand to resist the perversion of his people from the pure religion of his ancestors, the condition of the Jews was as degraded as it was possible for any despot to make it. The modern Turk—"the unspeakable Turk"—is regarded by most people as exhibiting the climax of iniquitous government, but Conder assures us, "The Jews under Antiochus were probably worse governed than even the Syrians of the present day under the Turks; for whilst the Koran is the standard, religious and civil, both of the Turk and the Moslem Syrian, the law of Moses was not recognized by Antiochus and his officers at all." Probably no people were ever in a more pitiable state, and their superior knowledge of morality must have only intensified their sufferings and sorrows. The law was burned wherever found, the temple stripped of everything of value, its services prohibited, its whole interior profaned and polluted, and its priests scattered. The people were driven by torture and threats of death to renounce the faith of their fathers and embrace debasing idolatry. Nearly every office in the land was filled by a foreigner who despised Judaism and hated and abused the Jews. Vile and avaricious men wrung taxes out of the people on almost every imaginable thing. Tribute, crown taxes, customs of salt, the third part of the seed, half of the fruit of the trees, 5,000 shekels of silver per year on the temple, a certain number of men compelled to go wherever they were wanted as soldiers, not only taxes on animals but liability to furnish them for the use of their oppressors whenever they chose to demand them—such were the burdens crushing down the Jews before the time of Judas Maccabæus.

To say that at least four-fifths of all this was remedied by the long and arduous labors and fightings of the Maccabees is to say a great deal, but it only represents a part of the benefits they conferred on their country. They arrested the degradation of their people, renewed their failing hope and trust in God, and their destiny as his witnesses for true religion and a pure family life. From the curse and incessant calamities of factious strife, with all its bloodshed and horrors, the Maccabees strove to deliver them, and to a very great extent they succeeded.

They taught them how to fight more successfully against their foes and how to manage their relations with other nations. Religion was elevated, the sacred writings collected and

¹ The principal work on Herod's temple seems to have covered a period of ten years, and the completion to have been resumed long afterward. It has been supposed, therefore, that the forty-six years belong to the date of the original temple of Zerubbabel.

preserved, patriotism was revived, and a willful, quarrelsome race firmly and patiently led on in the path of prosperity and progress. The people were stimulated to courage and to steadfast endurance. By example, the best of teachers, the Jews were taught to regard religion as worth living, laboring, suffering, and dying for. Liberty to serve God in their own way was put before them as their inalienable right, as men and children of the living God and Father of mankind. From the most abject subjection the Maccabees lifted their country higher and higher until, in the days of the brave and wise Simon, they enjoyed practical independence with the religious and civil liberty for which they had longed so ardently.

The benefits so hardly won were preserved for the nation just as long as the nation was worthy of them. Time, however, and the temptations always accompanying prosperity, gradually lowered that high conception of duty which animated and ennobled the self-renouncing Judas. The common ambitions for place, and wealth, and power took precedence of nobler motives and dragged down those who should have been examples for their people, until they acted as basely as their unworthiest subjects. The genius for discord which seems always to have been specially developed in the Jewish character completely undid the heroic work of the brave and single-hearted early Maccabees, and brought their house and nation to miserable dependence and finally to the blankest desolation.

Dissension and ambition were not the sole causes of the Jewish downfall. They had too many priests, scribes, etc., with too little to do. These long-robed favorites led the whole nation into the most lamentable waste of time and force over hair-splitting disputes concerning the least important things. While they magnified their position, they depraved the religious instincts of their people. The slavish attention to externalities left little time or energy for the cultivation of that fear of God and longing to do his commandments which their most gifted and spiritual prophets had so unweariedly impressed upon them. While they quarrelled over the petty details of a ridiculously cumbrous ceremonial, and multiplied the duties and observances until they were "too grievous to be borne," the weightier matters—"judgment, mercy, and faith"—were often neglected if not forgotten.

So easy is it for us to discern the causes of the ruin of the Jewish nation. "If we had lived in their days we would not have been partakers with them." This is very doubtful, for we often see indications that our many advantages over the Jews of two thousand years ago have not yet brought us to the summit of virtue.

Above all, let us remember that the good work done by the Maccabean patriots, the really pious Pharisees, scribes, and priests, was not in vain. Their sufferings and martyrdoms were not fruitless. It may be true that "the evil that men do lives after them," but it does not live with that vital moving force which is often ascribed to it. Good is stronger than evil, and it is never "interred with men's bones." The whole Jewish people to-day are wiser and better for the toils, and griefs, and errors of their ancestors. The follies and sins of the Maccabees, Pharisees, and Sadducees are scanned gently and then put in the background among the things to be forgiven if not entirely forgotten; while their zeal and labor, patience, courage, and self-denying devotion to the few grand religious principles they knew, loved, and died for, are placed high in front to guide and stimulate all races of mankind to press toward that mark which our high vocation constrains us and binds us always to strive to attain.

Herod's temple has been said to have been "a building which has perhaps never been surpassed in ancient or in modern times." There has been a certain fascination about it, which has produced almost endless studies of its plan and its proportion. It is certain that he spared no cost in building it. It seems certain that he doubled the space before occupied by the temple and its courts. The dimensions were therefore one stadium—about a quarter of a mile—each way. The temple itself was not larger than that of Solomon, but it was surrounded by an inner inclosure of great magnificence, and the outer inclosure was adorned with porticos of

greater splendor than any of which we know in the ancient world. The cloisters of this larger court were double rows of Corinthian columns, thirty-seven feet high, with flat roofs which rested against the outer wall of the temple itself. The royal porch which overhung the southern wall may be said to have consisted of a nave and two aisles; that on the temple side was open, that toward the country was closed by a wall. The breadth of the center aisle was forty feet and its height one hundred feet. The side aisles were thirty feet from center to center of the pillars. There were one hundred and sixty-two Corinthian columns, arranged in four rows of forty in each row, the odd two columns making a screen at the end of the bridge which led to the palace.

Not far from the front of the cloisters was a marble screen, beautifully ornamented and bearing inscriptions forbidding any Gentile to pass within. But the Jew who passed ascended a flight of steps to the platform on which the temple stood. The court of the temple itself was nearly square. The great ornament of the inner temple seems to have been in the gateways of the inner courts, and the pride of the temple was the great eastern gate, leading from the court of the women to the upper court. It is probably that which was called the "beautiful gate" in the New Testament. It was covered with carving, richly gilt, "more like the gopura of an Indian temple," says Mr. Fergusson, "than anything else with which we are acquainted." Immediately within this gateway was the altar of burnt offerings, fifty cubits square and fifteen cubits high.

It is curious that so little is known as to the style of architecture of the temple itself. But it ought to be said that some of the architects of our own time have shown good reason for their belief that the Saracenic or Oriental architecture, known to us from the triumphs of Islam, had its origin in the Oriental architecture of the temple at Jerusalem.

The Jews of the later years of Herod's time were not satisfied with the Roman rule. When our Savior came to manhood, the tetrarch Herod was engaged in war with his father-in-law, Aretas, the king of Arabia. With such local wars, and one and another insurrection against Roman authority, the Jews of Herod's time were familiar; but it would seem that the external prosperity of the Holy Land was, on the whole, increasing, up till the time when our gospels begin. Such magnificence as this of the temple shows great wealth which, from one source or another, Herod accumulated. His enterprises in other cities were only second to these in Jerusalem. Meanwhile, Jewish colonies, which we might almost call Jewish nations, were establishing themselves in Babylon and in Alexandria, and Jewish settlements on a smaller scale in other parts of the world. The old indignation of early prophets against Jews who left the Holy Land to "go down into Egypt" was renewed in like indignation in Herod's time. There grew up in Egypt a body of learned Jews whose studies of the ancient history were greatly modified by Greek philosophy and by the habits of Roman organization. Among these is to be named Philo, who has been spoken of. The success of the Jewish bankers gave to them, although they belonged to a despised race, something of the power which Jewish bankers have to-day. Such names as the names of Hillel and Schammai gave distinction to the studies of the wise men of Jerusalem. The religious parties, known as the Pharisees and Sadducees, were perhaps at the acme of such success as can wait on such speculation. The very curious community of ascetics, known as the Essenes, who preserved with great strictness the requisitions of the Jewish law, and united with them the requisitions of the most severe personal purity, had formed itself among men who retired from courts and politics. Such were the preparations, all-important, as history has shown, for the rapid propagation and extent of the gospel planting. The providential course of history for the four hundred years in which we have traced its annals, was a long preparation for the proclamation of the Gospel. "The chariot-wheels of Alexander smoothed the highways over which the apostles of the Cross were to travel."

At such a moment, in such a place, rightly regarded as the center of the ancient world, Jesus Christ was born. We call this moment the Fullness of Time. At this moment, in this place, "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light."

The plowing of the Lord is deep,
On ocean or on land ;
His furrows cross the mountain steep,
They cross the sea-washed sand.

Wise men and prophets know not how,
But work their Maker's will ;
The kings and nations drag the plow,
His purpose to fulfil.

They work his will because they must,
On hillside or on plain,
The clods are broken into dust
And ready for the grain.

Then comes the planting of the Lord ;
His kingdom cometh now ;
The seas in deepest depths are stirred
And all their secrets show.

The heralds of his march are heard,
And monarchs drag the plow.
Behold the seedtime of his word,
The sower comes to sow !

Edward E. Hale

BOOK XI.

LITERATURE AND MANUSCRIPTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

LITERATURE

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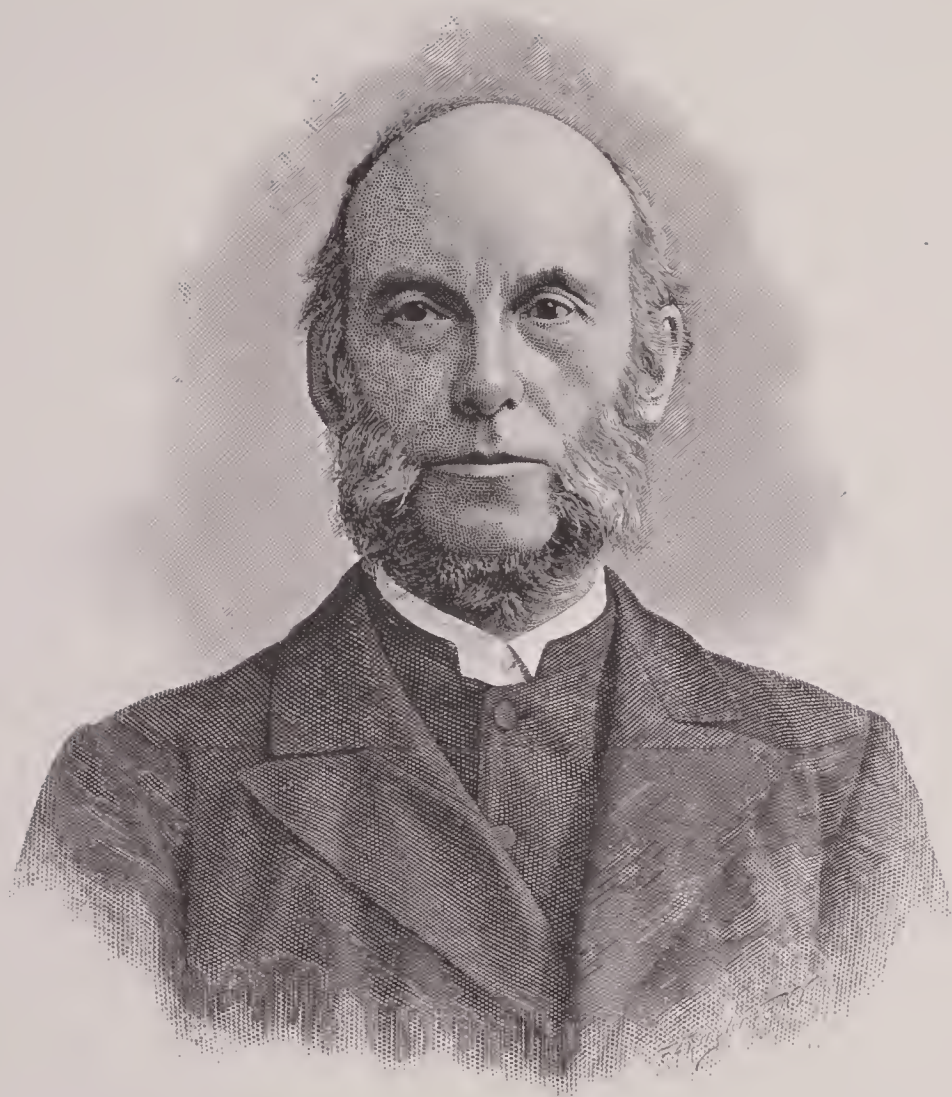
MANUSCRIPTS

BY

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Jos. Agar Beeth

BOOK XI.

LITERATURE AND HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE New Testament contains the earliest accounts of the teaching and work of Christ. Upon his teaching, and claims, and resurrection from the dead, rests the Christian hope. Consequently, as the documentary evidence for all these, the New Testament holds a place of unique importance in the literature of the world. Moreover, since the value of evidence depends upon the trustworthiness of its source and upon its nearness to the events attested, it is all-important to determine, as far as we can, the authorship and date of the various documents therein preserved. In other words, the inquiry before us is an important and necessary element of the historic defense of the Christian Faith.

In Chapters I-VII of this study we shall discuss the authorship, and time and place of writing, of the various books of the New Testament. In Chapter VIII we shall consider the correctness of our copies. This involves the correctness of the original manuscripts from which our versions were made, and their faithfulness in reproducing the original text. In Chapter IX we shall discuss in brief outline the historical trustworthiness of the various documents contained in the New Testament, and especially the historic reality of the picture of Christ there given; and the place of the New Testament in the great purpose of salvation for which God sent his Son into the world, and in the religious thought and life of the present day.

The New Testament contains four short memoirs of the life and teaching of Christ. Of these, the first three, commonly known as the Synoptic Gospels, though marked by very definite individuality, are closely related and stand together far removed in thought and language from the Fourth Gospel. Closely related to, and claiming common origin with, the Third Gospel, is a most interesting and valuable narrative of the founding of the early Christian Churches. Still more important is a group of thirteen letters written to various Churches or persons, and bearing the name of the most conspicuous of the Apostles of Christ. With these are other letters by various writers, one of them very closely, and two others less closely, related to the Fourth Gospel. Also related to the same in authorship, according to the tradition of the early Church, is a remarkable prophecy commonly known as the Book of Revelation. As the documentary evidence for the historic reality of Jesus Christ, the authorship and date of these writings demand now our best attention.

The evidence for the authorship and date of the Epistles attributed to Paul we shall find to be much more abundant and decisive than that for any other part of the New Testament. We shall, therefore, consider it first, and then make the proved genuineness of these Epistles a secure platform of approach to the authorship and value of the rest of the Christian Scriptures. We shall thus advance from matters about which we know more to other matters about which our evidence is less abundant.

CHAPTER I.

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL.

SINCE thirteen letters bear, in their text and not merely as a superimposed title, the name of Paul, the question of authorship is with them reduced to one of genuineness. We ask only: Are these letters what they profess to be? Were they actually written by the man whose name they bear? To answer this question, we must collect the evidence at our command.

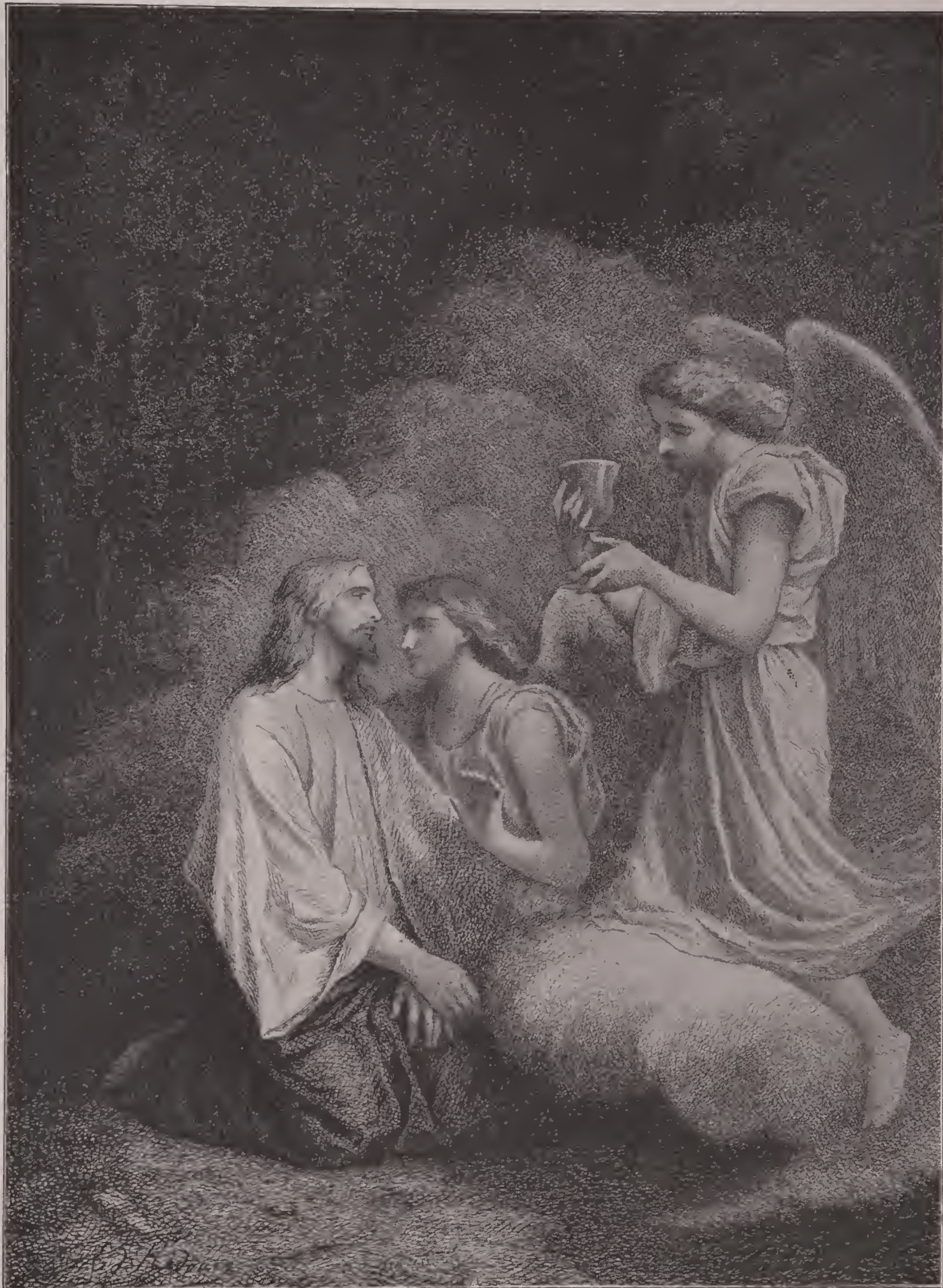
These letters fall, in order of time, as we shall see, into four groups. Those to the Thessalonians were written during Paul's second missionary journey, and in them we find the freshness of the springtime of his apostolic course. The Epistles to the Corinthians, Romans, and Galatians were written on his third journey, and in them we find the burning heat of summer and of noonday. The Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and to Philemon were written in prison, apparently during Paul's long imprisonment at Rome. In them we find the ripeness of a serene autumn. Later than these, and standing together, are the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, written in the last years of his life, and especially II. Timothy, in view of approaching death. We shall consider first, as the most important and as best attested, the second group, containing the three longer epistles, those to the Corinthians and the Romans, and one most closely related to this last, the Epistle to the Galatians.

The evidence for the authorship of an ancient work is to be found partly in the work itself and partly in other ancient documents in which mention is made of it. The proof of the genuineness of the epistles before us is to be found in a combination of testimony from each of these sources. We speak of them as internal and external evidence.

We turn first to Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine in the early part of the fourth century, from whose pen we have a "Church History" from the days of Christ to those of Constantine. In Book III, iii, 5, he writes: "The epistles of Paul are fourteen, all well known and beyond doubt. It should not, however, be concealed that some have set aside the Epistle to the Hebrews, saying that it was disputed, as not being Paul's." Evidently Eusebius accepted all thirteen epistles, without a shadow of doubt, as genuine. The same may be said of Origen, the earliest Biblical scholar, who lived in Egypt and Palestine, 186-253 A. D.

We have several works from the pen of Tertullian, the earliest Latin Christian writer, who lived at the close of the second century at Carthage, in North Africa. He accepts as genuine, with perfect confidence, all thirteen epistles. He appeals to the churches to which Paul wrote as the present guardians of his letters. So "Prescriptions Against Heretics," chapter 36: "With whom the authentic letters of the apostles are read, uttering the voice and representing the face of each one. Is Achaia near to thee? Thou hast Corinth. If thou art not far from Macedonia, thou hast Philippi; thou hast Thessalonica. If thou art able to go to Asia, thou hast Ephesus. If thou art near to Italy, thou hast Rome." We need not wonder that in this passage we have no mention of letters to private persons, namely, those to Philemon, Timothy, and Titus; or of those to Galatia and Colossæ, both of which cities were far inland and, therefore, less accessible. Moreover, Tertullian's abundant quotations prove that he not only accepted the epistles as genuine, but had them in a form practically the same as we now possess. Similar testimony is found in the voluminous writings of Clement of Alexandria, a somewhat earlier contemporary of Tertullian.

From the pen of Irenæus, who in 180 A. D. became bishop of Lyons, in Gaul, we have an important work, "Against Heresies." He tells us, in Book III, iii, 4, that in his youth he sat at the feet of Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John. He quotes as written by Paul all the epistles attributed to him, except the short letter to Philemon; and the more important epistles



BIDA.

JESUS IN PRAYER.

very frequently. He speaks, in Book I, xxvi, 2, of the Ebionites as rejecting the writings of Paul on the ground that he was an apostate from the Law. From this we learn that some admitted the genuineness, while they denied the authority, of the letters which bore the name of Paul.

We have one more witness of a still earlier date. A torn part of an ancient manuscript was found in the last century in the Ambrosian Library at Milan, which, from the discoverer, is called the "Fragment of Muratori." Its date is fixed by a reference to Pius I., who is said to have been "very lately bishop of Rome." From Irenæus, Book III, iii, 3, iv, 3, we infer that Pius was bishop in the middle of the second century. Consequently, the fragment must have been written by an earlier contemporary of Irenæus. It mentions by name each of the thirteen epistles attributed to Paul, with a short reference to the contents of each agreeing with the copies we now possess.

These witnesses prove, beyond possibility of doubt, that in the latter half of the second century, in places so far apart as Carthage, and Egypt, and Gaul—we may add by sure inference, in Greece and Rome—no one, friend or foe, doubted that these epistles were actually written by Paul. For the second and third groups, which include by far the most important letters attributed to Paul, the proof is overwhelming. These writings bear evidence to theological controversy even in the second century. But the controversy only makes more conspicuous the unanimity with which those who accept and those who reject the teaching of Paul agree that these letters are from his pen.

Christian literature earlier than Irenæus is scanty. But it contains a few references or apparent allusions to the Epistles of Paul. One of these is of the highest importance.

The earliest extant Christian document, after the books of the New Testament, is a letter from the church of Rome to that at Corinth, written probably about the close of the first century, and commonly known as the Epistle of Clement of Rome. It was written in order to heal a dissension which had broken out in the church at Corinth. The writer says, in chapter xlvii, "Take up the epistle of the blessed Paul the apostle. What at first did he write to you in the beginning of the Gospel? In truth, in a spiritual way he wrote a letter to you about both himself, and Cephas, and Apollos, because of your having even then made parties." This is an indisputable reference to the chief matter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. And it is complete proof that both at Rome and Corinth that epistle was accepted without a shadow of doubt, at the close of the first century, as written by the great apostle.

This evidence, strong as it is, is by no means the whole. The earliest witnesses to the authorship of the group of epistles now specially before us are the epistles themselves. As we read them, we find ourselves at once in the presence of a writer of great mental power and moral worth. We notice everywhere his well-balanced judgment, his broad grasp of principles, his unselfish devotion to the highest interests of his readers. Everything in us bows down with respect in the presence of one far greater and better than ourselves. The writer claims to be Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. The name and fame of Paul prove his existence, ability, and influence. These letters, proved by their contents to have been written by a man of worth and power, profess to have been written by Paul while he was engaged in active apostolic labor. The letters to Corinth imply that Paul had already been there, and was hoping soon to go again; the letter to Rome tells us that Paul had not yet been there, but expected shortly to visit that city.

An examination of these four letters, especially as compared with other contemporary documents not attributed to Paul, proves conclusively that all are from the same pen. Amid great differences, easily explained by different circumstances, both phraseology and modes of thought, each differing widely from all else in human literature, reveal a common origin. This is admitted by all students of these epistles.

The facts noted above demand explanation. If the letters before us were actually written by Paul, during his active apostolic labor, all is explained. In him we have an author worthy of the epistles, and in the epistles we have writings worthy of the great apostle. If he did not write them, we are compelled to believe that the actual and unknown writer passed them off as a work of the great apostle. This last suggestion is disproved by the epistles themselves. For a man who could write them would not try to palm them off as the work of another. This is specially evident in the Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians. For they deal with matters personal to Paul and his readers. To write such letters in his name would be utter fraud, and has no parallel in the honest pseudonymous literature of the ancient world. Nor would this suggestion account for the unanimous and early reception of these letters in the churches to which they were sent. For the forgeries could scarcely have been read in the churches before the death of the apostle. And, whenever read, people would ask at once, Why have we never before heard of these letters which profess to have been written to us so many years ago? The various personal details given in the epistles would at once detect the fraud. These details, at first sight so unimportant, are thus in some measure a guarantee of the genuineness of these valuable epistles.

That we have four letters professing to be from one pen, greatly increases the unlikelihood of fraud, or even of mistake about their authorship. For it is in the last degree unlikely that four letters not written by the apostle should come to be unanimously accepted as his. Moreover, the individuality and worth of each epistle negatives the suggestion that one or more are imitations of others which are genuine.

For the genuineness of the Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians we have other evidence peculiar and irresistible. Their contents are such as no forger would dare to write, and such as would certainly prevent their acceptance by the churches addressed except on evidence which forbade all doubt. Each letter abounds in severest condemnation. From I. Corinthians iv, 18, v, 2, we learn that self-conceited men resisted the apostle, and that the whole Church, inflated with pride, tolerated a crime not found even among the heathen. Church members insulted the Church, as we read in I. Corinthians vi, 1, by going to law one against another. In verse 18 we have a serious warning against intercourse with harlots. The Lord's Supper was shamefully desecrated, and some church members denied the general resurrection of the dead. In II. Corinthians xi, 13-20, we find that bad men, doing Satan's work and bitterly hostile to the apostle, were tolerated by the Church. In spite of reproof, as we read in chapters xii, 21, xiii, 2, some church members persisted in gross sensuality. The Epistle to the Galatians begins with a rebuke charging the readers with turning away from God to a perversion of the Gospel of Christ. And this tone is maintained throughout. Paul fears that in Galatia he has labored in vain.

Even if these descriptions of the persons addressed were true, no forger in the first century would dare to insert them in a letter for which he sought acceptance as written by Paul; nor would any church accept, without careful scrutiny, so terrible an indictment. The scrutiny could not fail to detect the imposture.

The profound impression which the Epistle to the Romans has made on the thought of all subsequent ages is complete proof of its genuineness. For the man who could write it would not hide himself under the name even of an apostle.

The above evidence is confirmed by a comparison of these epistles with the Book of Acts. Innumerable coincidences leave no room to doubt that in the former we have actual words of the great apostle, and in the latter, a true picture of real life.

To sum up: We have found that each of these four epistles was accepted with perfect confidence in the latter part of the second century as actually written by Paul, in places so far apart as Gaul, and Carthage, and Egypt, and, by sure inference, in Rome and Greece. One of them

was accepted as genuine during the lifetime of many who were born before Paul died at Rome. The contents of each letter were such as no forger could write or would dare to write. Had any one of these four letters stood alone, we should have accepted it with complete confidence as genuine. But the four epistles are evidently from the same pen; and the quadruple fraud involved in the supposition that they are spurious is utterly impossible. Moreover, their genuineness is confirmed by a variety of minute, and evidently undesigned, coincidences with an independent narrative of the founding of the earliest Christian Churches.

The decisiveness of this evidence has been universally felt. The genuineness of these letters has been accepted, in ancient and modern times, by all who have studied the subject. The famous rationalist, F. C. Baur, who rejects as mistaken the distinctive teaching of Paul, and denies the resurrection of Christ, which Paul so loudly asserts, says, in his work on "The Apostle Paul," Volume I, page 276: "Against these four epistles not even the slightest suspicion of spuriousness has ever been raised." Renan, in his "Saint Paul," Introduction, page 5, says that they are "incontestable and uncontested."

We now ask, When were these letters written? Our question may be answered in reference either to other known events in the writer's life, or to some common era, such as the year of our Lord. We shall endeavor to answer it in each reference.

Our evidence must be gathered from references to time in the epistles themselves, in the Book of Acts, and in other ancient documents.

From I. Corinthians xvi, 8, we infer that the First Epistle to the Corinthians was written from Ephesus; and this inference will be confirmed as we proceed. In verses 1 to 7, Paul speaks about a "collection for the saints," says that he intends to come through Macedonia to Corinth and that he hopes to find the collection ready, and that he will send or take it to Jerusalem. In II. Corinthians ii, 12, 13, we find that Paul has left Ephesus and come through Troas to Macedonia. From chapters viii, 1-4, ix, 1-6, xii, 20, xiii, 1, we learn that when Paul wrote the Second Epistle the collection in Macedonia was made, but not that in Achaia; and that Paul was on his way to Corinth, the capital of Achaia. In Romans xv, 25, 26, Paul tells his readers that the Christians of Macedonia and Achaia have made a contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem, and that he is on the way to Jerusalem with it. These references bind together the three epistles. Evidently the letter to Rome was written shortly after those to Corinth, and while Paul was engaged on the same business. From Romans i, 8-15, we learn that he has not yet been to Rome. But from I. Corinthians i, 14-16, iv, 15, we infer that Paul himself founded the church at Corinth; and from II. Corinthians xii, 14, xiii, 1, 2, that he had already paid two visits to that city.

We now turn to the Book of Acts, which gives an account of Paul's travels. It makes no mention of these epistles, nor directly of the collection for the saints, and may, therefore, be looked upon as an independent witness. Without assuming its trustworthiness, we will compare the account it gives with the facts just gathered from Paul's epistles. The proposed visit to Jerusalem cannot be later than that recorded in Acts xxi, 15. For on that visit he was arrested, and, as we learn from chapters xxiv, 27, xxviii, 30, remained in prison more than four years. And after this long imprisonment no room can be found for the apostolic activity referred to in the epistles now before us, which are followed by two groups of epistles that, as we shall find, must have been written much later than they. Unquestionably, these epistles were written earlier than Paul's arrest at Jerusalem.

This being so, we will trace, as recorded in the Book of Acts, Paul's steps prior to this visit to Jerusalem. In Acts xix, 21, we find him at Ephesus, intending to go through Macedonia and Achaia to Jerusalem, and then to Rome. From chapters xx, 1-10, 15, 16, xxi, 15, we learn that he actually went through Macedonia to Greece, which formed the Roman province of Achaia; and that after spending three months there he went through Macedonia, Troas, and

Miletus to Jerusalem. This circuitous route was occasioned by a plot of the Jews. He tells us in Acts xx, 23, that he has been warned of danger at Jerusalem: and, by a remarkable coincidence, fear of danger there finds expression in Romans xv, 30, 31. In the Book of Acts we have no direct mention of the collection; but, by another equally remarkable coincidence, in chapter xxiv, 17, Paul tells Felix that he came to Jerusalem bringing alms for his nation. Here, then, we have, in a connected narrative of Paul's third missionary journey, the various details of travel gathered from the epistles before us.

On the other hand, these letters cannot have been written during the second missionary journey in which Paul paid his first visits to Ephesus and Corinth, and which also led him apparently to Jerusalem. For the Epistles to the Corinthians could not possibly have been written, as this suggestion would imply, immediately after Paul's departure from that church.

The complete agreement between the notices in these epistles of Paul's movements and the narrative in the Book of Acts of his third missionary journey, and the impossibility of harmonizing these documents in any other way, leave no room for doubt that the letters before us were actually written on that journey.

If the above identification be correct, the First Epistle to the Corinthians was written from Ephesus, near the close of Paul's three years' (Acts xix, 10, xx, 31) sojourn there; and before the tumult which, as we learn from chapter xx, 1, hastened his departure. From I. Corinthians xvi, 8, we infer that it was written shortly before Pentecost. By a singular coincidence, a slab found at Ephesus tells us that the month of May was sacred to the goddess Artemis, whose splendid temple at Ephesus was one of the greatest attractions of the city. At no time of the year was an uproar against the preachers of a gospel antagonistic to all idolatry more likely than during the sacred month. Moreover, the reference in I. Corinthians v, 7, to "Christ, our Passover," suggests that the letter was written about Easter. We, therefore, infer that the letter was written about Easter, from Ephesus, near to the close of Paul's long sojourn there.

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written, as we learn from II. Corinthians ii, 13, vii, 5, 6, after Paul's arrival in Macedonia, and after his meeting with Titus, who brought good news about the church at Corinth. By another remarkable coincidence, Paul tells us in II. Corinthians i, 8-11, that he has lately escaped from deadly peril in Asia, of which province Ephesus was the capital. We cannot doubt that this peril was connected with the tumult recorded in the Book of Acts. These notes of time and place suggest that the Second Epistle was written from Macedonia a few months after the first.

After spending some time in Macedonia, Paul went on, as we read in Acts xx, 2, to Greece, and remained there three months. He then started through Macedonia on his way to Jerusalem. From verse 6 we learn that he spent Easter at Philippi. This being so, the three months spent in Greece must have been in the preceding winter, when traveling was difficult. This is in remarkable agreement with I. Corinthians xvi, 6, where Paul expresses a hope to spend the winter at Corinth.

The collection at Corinth, which, as we learn from II. Corinthians ix, 3-5, was not made when Paul wrote the Second Epistle to that church, he speaks of in Romans xv, 25, 26 as ready, and of himself as going with it to Jerusalem. This implies that the Epistle to the Romans was not written till after Paul's arrival at Corinth. And that Paul remained there three months suggests that this profound epistle was written at that time from that city. This suggestion is confirmed by the fact that communication with Rome was much easier from Corinth, the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, than from any other point in Paul's third missionary journey. Possibly Gaius, Paul's host while writing to the Romans, was the Gaius whom he mentions in I. Corinthians i, 14 as an exception to his rule not to baptize his own converts. From the above we infer, with reasonable certainty, that the First Epistle

to the Corinthians was written from Ephesus about Easter, shortly before the tumult raised by Demetrius; that the Second Epistle was written from Macedonia a few months later; and the Epistle to the Romans from Corinth, shortly before Paul started on his journey to Jerusalem, which was followed by his arrest in that city.

The date of these events in the Christian Era will be discussed when we come to consider the Book of Acts. We shall find reason to believe that the Epistles to the Corinthians were written in 58 A. D., and that to the Romans during the winter following.

The coincidences noted above, and others which space forbids me to mention, are additional evidence of the genuineness of the epistles and of the truthfulness of the Book of Acts. For they bear witness to the historic reality which finds expression in these documents. For the Epistle to the Galatians, indications of time and place are much less definite.

From a casual reference in Galatians iv, 13, to a "former" visit, we infer that Paul had twice visited Galatia. And two visits are mentioned in Acts xvi, 6, and xviii, 23. If this identification be correct, the Epistle to the Galatians was written not earlier than Paul's third missionary journey. From Galatia he went, as we read in Acts xix, 1, to Ephesus, where he spent three years. Now, the Epistle to the Galatians was evidently prompted, as we learn from the sharp rebuke in Galatians i, 6, by bad news about the Galatian Christians, and was written in order to stop the incipient apostacy. And Paul's long sojourn at Ephesus, which was within three hundred miles of Galatia by a direct route, suggests at once that this letter was written during his sojourn in that city. This is somewhat confirmed by the word "quickly" in Galatians i, 6. Moreover, this suggestion would allow us to account for Paul's silence, when writing to the Galatians, about the collection for Jerusalem, by supposing that this letter was written before he took it in hand, and gave, as we read in I. Corinthians xvi, 1, directions about it to the churches of Galatia. For these reasons many writers suppose that the Epistle to the Galatians was written from Ephesus. If so, it was written probably before the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and a year or more before that to the Romans.

Internal and much more reliable evidence points to a later date. The Epistle to the Galatians reveals a remarkable similarity, in doctrine, and argument, and phraseology, to the Epistle to the Romans. Compare Galatians ii, 16, iii, 8, 24, with Romans iii, 24, 26, 28, 30, v, 1. This is the more remarkable because the phrase *justified through faith* is found elsewhere in the New Testament only in Acts xiii, 39, where we have recorded words of Paul. Compare also the argument in Galatians iii with that in Romans iv; the contrast of *flesh* and *spirit* in Galatians v, 16, 25, with Romans viii, 4; Galatians v, 18, with Romans viii, 14; and other coincidences innumerable. In both epistles, the moral teaching of the Mosaic Law is summed up in the words of Leviticus xix, 18. Now, the mental versatility of Paul makes it somewhat unlikely that these topics would occupy the prominent place in his thought which we find them holding in these epistles, for more than a year. And it is almost inconceivable that, during such period of sustained and concentrated thought, the two Epistles to the Corinthians, in neither of which we find similar thoughts or words, could have been written. The analogy of the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians (see below) suggests that also the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians were written about the same time.

To this suggestion there is no serious objection. For the word "quickly" in Galatians i, 6, is a relative term. The apostacy, apparently, of whole churches, even after some years, might seem to Paul a wonderfully early desertion of the faith so eagerly embraced. Moreover, news which reached Ephesus might soon travel to Corinth. Our ignorance of details forbids us to base a confident argument on Paul's silence about the collection for Jerusalem. Certainly these difficulties are less than the great difficulty of supposing that the Epistles to the Corinthians were written between those to the Galatians and the Romans. On the other hand, if when Paul wrote this letter he had been lately engaged with a collection for poor Christians at

Jerusalem, this may have called to his mind a promise made at Jerusalem many years before, and have prompted the somewhat unexpected reference to it in Galatians ii, 10.

We now ask, Which epistle was written earlier, that to the Romans or that to the Galatians? The chief argument of this latter epistle was prompted by an emergency, the defection of the Galatian Christians; and the great doctrine of Justification through Faith, thus forced by circumstances upon Paul's most serious attention, becomes in the Epistle to the Romans the foundation-stone of a complete and compact exposition of the Gospel. This suggests that the Epistle to the Galatians was earlier than that to the Romans. In the former epistle, Justification through Faith is the one doctrine discussed and defended at length; in the latter, it is the first of several doctrines fully expounded and set forth in their mutual relations. We may, therefore, in the absence of definite notes of time, such as enabled us to fix with approximate exactness the time and place of the Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians, accept as probable that Paul wrote to the Galatians shortly after he arrived at Corinth. in the autumn following the tumult at Ephesus.

These doubts about the time and place of writing of the Epistle to the Galatians cast no doubt whatever on its authorship. This is placed beyond doubt by the abundant marks of common authorship with the Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians, and by the impossibility of a letter containing rebukes so severe being accepted, apart from irresistible evidence, as genuine, taken in connection with its universal reception in the second century.

For these and similar reasons, which can be appreciated only by personal study of the epistles and of early Christian literature, the Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians have in all ages been confidently accepted by all students of the Holy Scriptures, with exceptions too few to mention, as genuine works of the great apostle. This we may welcome as an assured result of Biblical research.

This result is of the highest importance. For it at once spans over eighteen centuries, places us by the side of the ablest of the apostles, and enables us to look at Christ and the Gospel from his point of view. It thus forms a secure platform, in the midst of the first century, from which we can survey and estimate other documents, by Paul and others, claiming to have been written in the same century. This justifies both the space we have given to this group of epistles, and its place at the beginning of this Introduction to the Books of the New Testament.

The two Epistles to the Thessalonians were accepted as genuine, without a shadow of doubt, by Tertullian in his work "Against Marcion" and elsewhere, by Clement of Alexandria, by Irenæus, and in the "Fragment of Muratori." Consequently, as with those discussed above, either these epistles also are genuine, or we must suppose that forgeries were, in the second century, accepted all round the Mediterranean as works of the great apostle.

A comparison of these epistles with those discussed above and with other early Christian documents not claiming to have been written by Paul, *e. g.*, with the Epistle to the Hebrews, reveals a close similarity, in modes of thought and in phraseology, with his undoubted epistles. This similarity, which cannot be further expounded here, will be apparent to every careful student, even of the English Bible. Yet the epistles contain marks of independence, both in thought and diction, which forbid the suggestion that they were imitations of other letters of Paul.

A note of the early date of the epistle is found in I. Thessalonians iv, 15, "We who are living, who are being left [while some others had been taken away] for the coming of the Lord," etc., words which could scarcely have been written later than the days of the apostles. For, although it is unfair to infer from these words that Paul confidently expected to survive the Coming of Christ, he could not have written thus had he known that all the men then living would die before that event. Nor, different as they are, can we accept these words

as an imitation of I. Corinthians xv, 51. They are, therefore, an indication of the very early date of the epistle, and thus increase the difficulty of supposing that it was not written by the apostle.

Against the genuineness of these epistles there is nothing to set. The prominence of the Second Coming of Christ, a feature distinguishing this group from the other epistles of Paul, was prompted, as we infer from I. Thessalonians iv, 13, by the death of some Christians at Thessalonica, and in the Second Epistle, by a misunderstanding, as we infer from II. Thessalonians ii, 2, of some words in the First Epistle. Consequently, this element in these epistles is no proof or presumption that they are not genuine, and I do not know of any other objections worthy of mention. The genuineness of these epistles is further confirmed by comparison of certain internal indications of time and place of writing with the narrative of the Book of Acts.

In I. Thessalonians i, 1, Paul associates with himself, in sending this letter, Silvanus and Timothy. He refers in verses 6 and 9 to his readers' conversion as recent; and in chapter ii, 1, 2, 9, 10, to his own labors in their midst, after ill treatment at Philippi. He tells us in chapters ii, 17, iii, 8, that he had been torn from them, and longed to return, but was unable to do so; that he sent Timothy to strengthen them, and that this last had returned with good news about their faith and stability. In II. Thessalonians i, 1, Silvanus and Timothy are again associated with Paul; and in verse 3 he again thanks God for his readers' faith. In chapter iii, 1, 2, he begs for their prayers that he may be delivered from bad men: a remarkable coincidence with Romans xv, 30, 31 and II. Corinthians i, 11. From II. Thessalonians iii, 17, we infer that the letter was not written with Paul's own hand, in close agreement with Romans xvi, 22.

Turning now to Acts xv, 40, xvi, 1, we find that on his second missionary journey Paul was accompanied by Silas, and that he was joined at Lystra by Timothy. That in the Book of Acts we several times read of Silas, never of Silvanus, and in the epistles only of Silvanus, leaves no room for doubt that there are two forms of the same name. From chapters xvi, 12, xvii, 1, we learn that the travelers went to Philippi, where Paul and Silas were put in prison, and then to Thessalonica; and from chapter xvii, 10, that Paul and Silas hastily left Thessalonica and went by night to Berea. In this last city, as we read in verse 14, Paul left Silas and Timothy and went to Athens, and then to Corinth where, as we learn from chapter xviii, 5, Silas and Timothy rejoined him. The close agreement between this record of travel, and peril, and work, and the references quoted above from the epistles before us—an agreement the more remarkable because the narrative says nothing about the letters—is a very strong confirmation of the truth of the narrative and of the genuineness of the letters. Taken in connection with the confident reception of the letters in the second century, and their close agreement in thought and style with the letters already discussed, it is complete proof that they were actually written by the great apostle.

Since the Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians were written, as we have seen above, on Paul's third missionary journey, and those to the Thessalonians, as we have just learned, on his second journey, these last must be the earlier of the two groups of letters.

Much more important than the Epistles to the Thessalonians are those to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and to Philemon. These stand together as a definite group, and with characteristics in common which distinguish them from the other letters of Paul.

Abundant quotations prove that the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians were accepted with perfect confidence by Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Irenæus, as written by Paul. That the short Epistle to Philemon is not quoted by Clement and Irenæus, need not surprise us. It is referred to, as Paul's, by Tertullian, who tells us that it was accepted in its entirety, in the middle of the second century, by the heretic Marcion, who mutilated or rejected other epistles of Paul. It is three times quoted, word for word, by Origen,

and its genuineness is defended by Jerome, in the latter part of the fourth century. All four epistles are mentioned in the "Fragment of Muratori."

This unanimous consent is a strong presumption of the genuineness of these four epistles. We ask whether it is confirmed or contradicted by their contents. Unfortunately, we cannot, as before, compare them with the Book of Acts, for apparently they were written after its narrative closes. Our only standards of comparison are the epistles already traced to the pen of Paul.

We consider first the Epistle to the Philippians. In Acts xxviii, 31, we leave Paul in prison at Rome, after an appeal to Cæsar; and in Philippians i, 13, 20-23, iv, 22, we find him in bonds, weighing the possibilities of life and death, and sending greetings from members of Cæsar's household. In Philippians i, 1, as in II. Corinthians i, 1, Timothy (who is said in Acts xvii, 14, xviii, 5, to have been with Paul at the founding of the churches at Philippi and Corinth) is associated with him as joint author of the epistle. The description of Timothy in Philippians ii, 19-22, and his hoped-for mission to Philippi, are in close agreement with I. Corinthians iv, 17. The gift of money from Philippi to Paul at Rome accords completely with the statement in II. Corinthians xi, 8, 9, that when he was in want at Corinth his needs were supplied by money sent from Macedonia, in which province was Philippi; and with the great liberality of another kind of which Paul boasts in II. Corinthians viii, 2. His deep anxiety about the church at Corinth, in II. Corinthians ii, 13, and vii, 5, has its counterpart in the loving care for the Christians at Philippi which breathes in Philippians i, 7, 8, 27, ii, 19, iv, 1. Paul's reference in Philippians iii, 6, to his past life recalls Galatians i, 13. In a somewhat changed tone, easily explained by changed surroundings and prospects, the careful student will find innumerable coincidences in theological thought and expression revealing the hand and mind of Paul. As examples I may quote the word *righteousness* in Philippians iii, 9, as compared with Romans x, 3, iii, 21, 22; Philippians ii, 7, compared with II. Corinthians viii, 9; and Philippians iii, 18, with Galatians vi, 14. This far-reaching coincidence of thought and expression becomes the more significant if this epistle be compared with any which do not bear the name of Paul.

The above evidence, which might be extended indefinitely, is confirmed by the tender affection which breathes in every line of the epistle, and which cannot be the offspring of deception. This combined evidence is complete proof that the beautiful Epistle to the Philippians was actually written by Paul.

In the Epistle to the Colossians, we meet everywhere words, phrases, thought, and arrangement already familiar to us in the earlier epistles, and in great part peculiar to Paul. Compare Colossians i, 20, 22, with Romans v, 10, II. Corinthians v, 18, 20; Colossians i, 26, ii, 2, iv, 3, with Romans xvi, 25, 26, I. Corinthians ii, 7; Colossians ii, 8, with Galatians iv, 3; Colossians ii, 11, 12, with Romans vi, 4, 5; and everywhere the distinctively Pauline phrases "in Christ" and "in the Lord." The metaphor, peculiar in New Testament to Paul, of the Church as the "body" of Christ, found already in I. Corinthians xii, 12-27, Romans xii, 4, 5, meets us in Colossians i, 18, 24, ii, 19, with a new development, namely, Christ the "Head." In Colossians iv, 7, Tychicus is said to have been sent to Colossæ; in Acts xx, 4, he is a companion of Paul in travel, and is called a native of the province of Asia in which Colossæ was situated. That in Colossians iv, 10, Mark is called a cousin of Barnabas, helps to explain Acts xv, 37—an important coincidence. The autograph in Colossians iv, 18, recalls Galatians vi, 11.

The real significance of the above coincidences can be fairly estimated only by careful and consecutive study of the epistle itself, and by comparison of it with the earlier and undisputed epistles of Paul, and with other documents not from his pen. For some of these words and phrases are used by other writers. Their value as proofs of common authorship lies in their accumulation in this one short epistle and in their relation to the surrounding train of thought.

It is right to say that some scholars deny that the Epistle to the Colossians is from Paul, on the ground that the errors therein combated were not prevalent till long after his death; and that it contains teaching not found in his earlier epistles, and words and phrases not used there. The issue thus raised must be decided by judging whether it is easier, accepting the epistle as genuine, to explain these three grounds of objection, or, rejecting it as spurious, to account for the coincidences noted above and for the universal and confident reception of the epistle in the latter part, and probably in the middle, of the second century. This alternative we will now consider.

The words and phrases peculiar to this epistle need cause little surprise. Indeed, the new topics now dealt with suggest and require words not used before. And, in spite of differences, the style is closely akin to that of the Epistle to the Philippians and not far removed from that of the earlier epistles. The new elements of teaching are legitimate and most valuable developments of the principles underlying the acknowledged epistles. Is it not more likely that such developments would take place in the mind and thought of Paul than among disciples removed from him by more than a generation? Indeed, the change from active evangelistic labor to the solitude of a prison would naturally prompt, in a man like Paul, profound investigation of the foundations of his faith. The wonder would be if such investigation were barren of results. On the other hand, the entire extant literature of the second century presents nothing comparable for a moment to the solid advance in Christian thought embodied in this epistle. To place it fifty years after the death of Paul is an utter anachronism. Lastly, any argument based on the supposed later date of the errors here combated is most uncertain, for they were an outgrowth of influences at work before the birth of Christ. And, so far as they can be traced in this epistle, the errors at Colossæ were very rudimentary. Much more developed is the Gnosticism of Cerinthus, who is said to have been a contemporary of the Apostle John. These objections have little weight as proofs that the epistle is not from its professed writer.

The profound thought embodied in this epistle cannot be the offspring of a forger or imitator. Nor could a spurious epistle have made its way to distant Carthage and Gaul, and have gained acceptance everywhere as a genuine work of Paul. Certainly these suggestions involve improbabilities infinitely greater than any difficulty in supposing that the Gnosticism of the second century existed in germ in the days of Paul, and that the teaching of this epistle is from the pen of the great thinker who expounded so grandly, in the Epistle to the Romans, the principles of which it is a logical development. We may, therefore, accept the Epistle to the Colossians with perfect confidence as actually written by the great apostle whose name it bears.

The beautiful Epistle to Philemon contains nothing inconsistent with genuineness, and bears everywhere marks of the hand and character of Paul. Among these must be reckoned the absence of any request for the manumission of Onesimus. Tact so delicate belongs not to a forger. The names sending greeting to Philemon are a valuable coincidence with the same names in the Epistle to the Colossians.

The Epistle to the Ephesians bears nearly all the marks of genuineness adduced for that to the Colossians, and some others. One of these is the reappearance and careful treatment of the distinction of Jew and Gentile so conspicuous in the second group, as compared with the works of all other New Testament writers. This reveals a mind long and deeply occupied with the different relations of Jew and Gentile to the kingdom of God. And indisputably it is a mark of early date. For it is inconceivable that, after Jerusalem had been taken and the race scattered, and after Gentile Christianity had gained a secure and independent position, any writer would lay so much stress on the equality in spiritual privilege of the Gentiles to the Jews. Jewish Christians who still clung to their ancient prerogatives would not place the Gentiles on their own level. A Gentile writer who had witnessed the dispersal of the Jewish race would

consider it but small honor that God had placed the Gentiles on a level with the nation which had murdered the Son of God. Now, early date is a strong presumption of genuineness, for it is most unlikely, while men were living who had known Paul, that the work of some unknown author would have been widely and confidently accepted as his.

Another sure mark of early date is the enumeration, in Ephesians iv, 11, of church officers as apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers. For, as one learns from letters attributed with much probability to Ignatius, and as we infer from later writers, monarchical episcopacy was firmly established early in the second century. Had there been, when this letter was written, an order of bishops distinct from, and above, the elders, which we may here identify with the pastors and teachers, these could not have been passed over in silence. On the other hand, this enumeration is in complete accord with I. Corinthians xii, 28.

The style of the Epistle to the Ephesians is no more unlike that of the acknowledged letters of Paul than is that of the Epistle to the Colossians. One special objection, however, is brought against the former epistle by some who accept the latter as genuine. The many indisputable and close coincidences in thought and expression are appealed to in proof that one epistle is a later imitation of the other. And since the Epistle to the Colossians has a specific occasion in the definite errors therein refuted, nearly all who reject one of the epistles reject that to the Ephesians. Indisputably, either one epistle is a servile imitation of the other or they are twin offspring of one mind.

Our choice between these suppositions depends upon our estimate of the Epistle to the Ephesians as compared with that to the Colossians. Space forbids me to make the comparison here. My own judgment is that in grandeur and worth the Epistle to the Ephesians is unsurpassed by any human composition. And its worth proves its genuineness, for we cannot conceive a man capable of the profound thought which breathes throughout this epistle becoming so servile an imitator even of an apostle. Independent thought always clothes itself in fitting language of its own.

On the other hand, if our judgment be that the epistle is an imitation, we are met by an inexplicable difficulty, namely, the early and unanimous and confident reception of it as written by Paul. If the work were by a later hand, would every trace of its origin have vanished utterly from the memory of the early Church? This difficulty is increased by the widespread and uncontradicted tradition which connects with Ephesus the last years of the Apostle John. For he would know whether the Church in which he lived had a letter from the hand of Paul. Consequently, if not written by him, the epistle must be a work of the second century. Yet, as we infer from Tertullian, in the middle of the century it was accepted as genuine even by Marcion, an enemy of the Gospel.

Some have suggested that the name of Paul was prefixed by some unknown but good man to a work of his own, not to deceive, but in order to call attention to sentiments similar to those of the great apostle. Others have suggested that the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians have, one or both, been interpolated; that on the basis of a shorter work actually written by Paul have been erected, perhaps by one hand, the two documents we now possess. But it is inconceivable that the original epistles should pass utterly out of view, and that one single corrupted recension should alone survive. Nor could the sort of man suggested possibly have written the epistle we now have.

It is worthy of note that these wild suggestions come only from those who have already persuaded themselves that Christ did not rise from the dead, and that Christianity, with its mighty effect upon the world, is a result of the preaching of men who were in most serious error touching the nature and teaching of their Master.

In view, then, of their universal reception throughout the Roman empire, by friends and enemies, in the latter part of the second century, of their deep, and broad, and minute

agreement with the thought and phraseology of Paul, and of their matchless and independent worth, we may accept, without a shadow of doubt, each of the epistles of this third group as a genuine work of the Apostle Paul.

When were these epistles written? For the first time, Paul now writes as a prisoner: Ephesians iii, 1, iv, 1, vi, 20; Philippians i, 7, 13; Colossians iv, 3, 18; Philemon, 10, 13, 22, 23. These frequent references to his bondage reveal the deep mark it had made in his thought and heart, and thus prove that his imprisonment had lasted for some time. Now, in the Book of Acts no long imprisonment of Paul is recorded earlier than his arrest at Jerusalem. This is a very strong presumption that these epistles were later than that event. After his arrest, Paul remained for more than two years a prisoner at Cæsarea, was then taken to Rome, and remained there in prison for not less than two years: Acts xxiv, 27, xxviii, 30. Whether he was then set free, we have no positive information. This long imprisonment, affording abundant leisure for writing letters, suggests itself at once as the time when these epistles of captivity were written. An early and unanimous tradition asserts that they were written during Paul's imprisonment at Rome. With such scanty indications as we have, we will now test this tradition.

"Cæsar's household," in Philippians iv, 22, points very clearly to the imperial palace at Rome. And "the whole prætorium" or "prætorian guard," in chapter i, 13, suggests much more forcibly the prætorian guard at Rome than the narrow limits of the governor's palace at Cæsarea. Against these indications there is nothing to set.

That the Epistle to the Colossians was written at the same time as that to the Ephesians, is made almost certain by the reference, in Ephesians vi, 21, and Colossians iv, 7, to "Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord," as evidently the bearer of both epistles, taken in connection with the very close similarity of the epistles in thought, order, and phraseology—a similarity without parallel in the New Testament, and with the proof just given that both epistles were written by Paul.

The letter to Philemon was apparently (see verse 12) taken by Onesimus, who is said in Colossians iv, 9, to be accompanying Tychicus to Colossæ. Moreover, of six men with Paul who sent greeting to the Church at Colossæ, we notice that five send greeting to Philemon. These remarkable coincidences prove conclusively that the short letter to Philemon was written and sent at the same time as those to Ephesus and Colossæ.

Whether these letters were written from Cæsarea or from Rome, we have no evidence of much weight except the unanimous tradition of the early Church and certain similarities of thought and diction between the Epistle to the Philippians and those to Rome and Corinth. Compare Philippians iii, 9, with Romans i, 17, iii, 21, 22, x, 3; also Philippians iii, 4-6, with II. Corinthians xi, 21-30; and other phrases found only in the earlier epistles. These similarities, together with others which link the Epistle to the Philippians with those to Ephesus and Colossæ, suggest very strongly that of the three letters that to Philippi was written first. And if so, since this last was apparently written from Rome, the two others cannot have been written during Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea. We may, therefore, accept as probably correct the ancient tradition that all four letters were written from Rome. And if so, perhaps the letter to Philippi was written during the first year of Paul's imprisonment at Rome. This would allow time for the news of Paul's imprisonment to reach Philippi, and for the journey of Epaphroditus to Rome: see Philippians ii, 25-30, iv, 10-18. The different style of the other epistles suggests that they were written near to the close of Paul's two years' imprisonment at Rome.

The beautiful Epistle to the Philippians was Paul's acknowledgment of the gift brought by Epaphroditus. The letter to Philemon was a request to receive back a runaway slave, Onesimus, by whom evidently it was carried. The letter to Colossæ was written to correct errors in the church there of which Paul had heard from Epaphras, the founder (see Colossians i, 7) of



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that church. The words "in Ephesus" in Ephesians i, 1, are, in the two oldest and best copies, which very seldom agree in error, inserted only by a later hand. But all early writers quote the epistle as written to the Ephesians. Of all this, the easiest explanation is that copies of the epistle were sent to other churches in Asia, and that in each copy was inserted the name of the church to which it was sent. Such a copy, perhaps, was "the epistle from Laodicea," a town near to Colossæ, mentioned in Colossians iv, 16. This suggestion would account for a letter so general being written to a church so well known to Paul.

The Epistles to Timothy and Titus were accepted by Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Irenæus, with complete confidence as genuine, and as such they are enumerated in the "Fragment of Muratori." Their vocabulary and diction differ from the other epistles attributed to Paul. But with these last they agree, in phraseology, modes of thought, and theological teaching, much more closely than with any other early documents. And their independent worth proves that they are not mere imitations of the genuine letters of Paul. The close harmony between the picture of Timothy reflected in these letters and the various references to him in the other epistles attributed to Paul is a strong confirmation of their genuineness. So lifelike a picture can have been taken only from life.

The pastoral epistles contain, moreover, two clear indications of very early date. The first is that we find in them only two orders of church officers—bishops or elders, and deacons. So I. Timothy iii, 1-13, v, 17; Titus i, 5-9. We have the same titles, "bishops and deacons" in Philippians i, 1. And throughout the New Testament we have no order higher than that of elders or bishops, these titles being evidently equivalent. The same two orders, and of ordinary church officers these only, are mentioned also in the Epistle of Clement of Rome and in the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles—a document probably from the close of the first century. In marked contrast to all these, the letters attributed to Ignatius, written probably early in the second century, reserve the title *bishop* for one man exercising supreme authority in his own church, with whom are associated a lower order of elders. So in the Ignatian Epistle to the Ephesians, chapter iv, we read: "the presbyter is joined to the bishop as the strings to the harp." This use of the word *bishop* reveals the firm establishment of a higher order of church officers not mentioned in the New Testament. And this order soon became universal. The absence of all reference, in the pastoral epistles, to this higher order is clear proof that they are not later than the beginning of the second century. Another indication of the same is the rudimentary nature of the errors, prevalent in and around the church, to which reference is made in these epistles. For these contain germs of errors which early in the second century assumed definite concrete forms and which could hardly fail to appear in pseudonymous epistles. These marks of early date increase the difficulty of supposing that the epistles were not written by Paul. For while men were living who knew the apostle, detection would be almost certain.

The indications of date contained in these epistles cannot be fitted into the narrative in the Book of Acts. In I. Timothy i, 3, Paul, while himself going to Macedonia, urges Timothy to remain at Ephesus in order to correct errors there. But, when going from Ephesus to Macedonia on his third missionary journey, Paul sent Timothy before him, as we read in Acts xix, 22; I. Corinthians iv, 17, xvi, 10. Of the visit to Crete mentioned in Titus i, 5, we have no mention elsewhere in the New Testament, although possibly Paul visited that island during his residence at Corinth or at Ephesus. The references to persons in II. Timothy does not help us much. A surer indication of date is to be found in the style and contents of the epistles, for the three letters are closely related, even as compared with all other epistles of Paul. Evidently they are products of the same period of his life, and their references to church organization reflect the same stage of church development.

The approaching footsteps of the angel of death, we hear unmistakably in the pathetic yet hopeful words of II. Timothy iv, 6-8, "I am already being offered, and the time of my

departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness." Notice the contrast between these words and the uncertainty expressed in Philippians i, 21-26. The rescue for which the apostle hopes in II. Timothy iv, 18, is salvation "into the heavenly kingdom." The tone of the entire epistle leaves no room for doubt that, if genuine, it is the latest extant letter of Paul. From chapters i, 8, ii, 9, we infer that it was written in prison.

From I. Timothy iii, 14; Titus iii, 12, and from the absence of any reference to imprisonment, we infer that when these letters were written Paul was free, and engaged in active apostolic work. If, then, as we have seen, we have strong reasons for believing they were not written before Paul's arrest at Jerusalem, he must have been liberated after his two years' imprisonment at Rome. And, if so, we infer from I. Timothy i, 3; Titus i, 5, iii, 12, that after his release he visited Ephesus, Macedonia, Crete, and, perhaps, Nicopolis. If these references be correct, the First Epistle to Timothy and that to Titus were written on this, Paul's last missionary journey; and he was again imprisoned, and in prison wrote the Second Epistle to Timothy.

That Paul was released from his first imprisonment at Rome, and made another evangelistic journey, and was put to death at Rome, is the unanimous opinion of early Christian writers. The "Fragment of Muratori" speaks of him as going from Rome to Spain. This implies his liberation. In his "Church History," Book II, xxii, 2, Eusebius says that Paul, "after pleading his cause, is said to have been sent again upon the ministry of preaching, and that after a second visit to the city, he finished his life with martyrdom. Whilst he was a prisoner, he wrote his Second Epistle to Timothy, in which he mentions both his first defense and his impending death." Eusebius then quotes chapter iv, 16-18, and verse 6.

This ancient and unanimous opinion seems to me to be the only explanation, and a satisfactory explanation, of all the facts of the case. It accounts for the many points of contact, both in thought and phrase, between these epistles and the others proved to have been written by Paul. It accounts for certain differences in vocabulary and style, by placing an interval of time between these epistles and the earlier groups. It accounts for the rudimentary forms of church organization and of heresy portrayed here; and for the immense superiority of these letters to all Christian literature of the second century. And it saves us from the impossible task of explaining the confident and unanimous reception, from the middle of the second century onward, throughout the Roman empire, of spurious writings as genuine letters of Paul. We infer, therefore, with reasonable certainty that the First Epistle to Timothy was written after Paul's release, and while on a last missionary journey. The place is unknown. The mention of Macedonia in I. Timothy i, 3, and Paul's apparent sojourn at Philippi suggested in Acts xx, 6, together with his great love for the church in that city, suggest that possibly it was written there. On the same journey, we may suppose that he wrote to Titus. That he died at Rome suggests that from that city he wrote the Second Epistle to Timothy.

At this point we will sum up the results of our researches so far. We have found complete proof that the Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians were written by Paul on his third missionary journey, recorded in Acts xix, 23, xxi, 17; that the First Epistle to the Corinthians was written from Ephesus near to the close of his long sojourn there, and probably about Easter; that the second epistle was written from Macedonia a few months later, and that the Epistle to the Galatians, probably, and that to the Romans almost certainly, were written from Corinth during the winter following. We have also found proof sufficient for reasonable certainty that the letters to Thessalonica were written by Paul, apparently from Corinth during his long sojourn there on his second missionary journey. We have also found evidence sufficient to banish all doubt that the third group was written by Paul, the Epistle to the Philippians almost certainly, and those to the Ephesians, Colossians, and to Philemon

with great probability, from Rome during his two years' imprisonment there. Lastly, we have found good reasons for belief that the letters to Timothy and Titus were written by the same great apostle, two of them after his release and during an apostolic journey, and the Second Epistle to Timothy at Rome shortly before his death.

These four groups of epistles correspond severally to the circumstances of the writer, and reveal a progressive development of his thought. Those to the Thessalonians contain words to young converts from their father in Christ who had been suddenly torn from them, and deal with a doctrinal difficulty. The First Epistle to the Corinthians deals with various practical matters which had arisen in the life of the church. The second epistle is a supplement to the first, and deals also with practical matters, while at the same time Paul vindicates, against certain detractors, his apostolic authority. To the Galatians he discusses a vital doctrinal matter; and to the Romans gives an orderly account of the Gospel as he was accustomed to preach it. The third group gives us matured thought, nurtured in the solitude of Paul's imprisonment at Rome. In the letter to Philippi we have an outburst of Christian affection to the purest of the churches founded by Paul, revealing his inmost spiritual life. That to Colossæ embodies his loftiest thought about the nature and work of his Master. The letter to Ephesus depicts the Church as in the eternal past it presented itself to the loving thought and purpose of Christ; and as it will stand when the toil, and conflict, and sorrow of the present life are but a fading dream of the past, in glorious reality before the satisfied eye of him who loved it and gave himself for it, the spotless bride of the Eternal Son. In the Epistle to Philemon we have a charming letter to a friend. The First Epistle to Timothy and that to Titus give us a picture of the churches at the close of Paul's career. And in the Second Epistle to Timothy we have his dying counsels to a beloved fellow-helper. The great and independent worth of each of these epistles is a complete confirmation of the confident belief of all churches throughout the world in the second century, that they are all from the pen of the greatest of the apostles.

The researches embodied above are of the utmost importance, for they enable us to trace to the pen and thought of the illustrious apostle who founded the churches of Europe a very definite conception of Christ and the Gospel set forth in documents which lie open to our inspection; and even to trace the development of this conception during the lifetime and in the thought of Paul. We now ask, To what extent does this conception agree with the historic reality, and the actual teaching and claims of Christ? This question, the New Testament enables us to answer by placing before us other very early Christian documents altogether independent of, and differing widely from, those which we have traced to the pen of Paul. The authorship, date, and trustworthiness of these other documents demand now our best attention.

CHAPTER II.

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS.

THE Second Gospel gives us an account of the life and teaching of Christ, beginning with the appearance of John the Baptist. The First Gospel gives a similar account, beginning with the announcement of the birth of Jesus, and prefixes to this his genealogy from Abraham. The Third Gospel begins with the announcement of the birth of John, and contains a genealogy of Jesus from Adam. The first two chapters in the First and Third Gospels, which recount events earlier than the appearance of the Baptist, differ generally, and are evidently independent. But after his appearance all three narratives flow on in parallel lines, recounting to a large extent the same events, usually in the same order, and not unfrequently in similar language. For this reason they are called the Synoptic (or seeing-together) Gospels. Their similarity proves that they have to some extent a common origin. Very different is the Fourth Gospel which, both in the events and discourses recorded, and in tone of thought and phraseology, differs widely from the Synoptic Gospels. All four Gospels are anonymous. The titles given to them are only labels, attached by later hands, although by hands as old as our earliest manuscripts. Consequently, about the Gospels there is no question of genuineness, for they make no claim to any definite authorship. The only questions are touching their writers, dates, and trustworthiness. Answers to these questions must be sought in the Gospels themselves and in ancient Christian literature.

Eusebius, in his "Church History," Book III, xxiv, and all later writers up to recent times, speak with complete confidence of the Four Gospels as written by the apostles Matthew and John, and by Mark and Luke, friends of the apostles. The same confidence pervades the writings of Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Irenæus. This last says, in his work on "Heresies," Book III, i, "Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundation of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterward, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon his breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia." Abundant quotations prove decisively that Irenæus had before him the Four Gospels in a form practically the same as that which we now possess; and prove that these stood alone, even in his day, above any similar works, as authentic and in some sense official records of the life and teaching of Christ. The beginning of the "Fragment of Muratori" is torn off. But we read that "Luke, the physician, whom Paul took with him, composed the Third Book of the Gospel according to Luke;" and that the Fourth Gospel was written by the Apostle John.

We have a still earlier witness, whose works unfortunately have perished, except in important quotations. Irenæus, in Book V, xxxiii, 4, of his work on "Heresies," speaks of a writer named Papias, whom he calls "the hearer of John and a companion of Polycarp." Even if this description be not correct, it compels us to believe that Papias lived early in the second century. Eusebius, in Book III, xxxix, of his "Church History," quotes Papias as saying that "Matthew composed the oracles in the Hebrew dialect, and each interpreted them as he could;" and that "Mark, having become Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately all that he remembered; though he did not record in order that which was either said or done by Christ."

From the pen of Justin, who was born in the early years of the second century, and died as a martyr about 166 A. D., we have a First and Second Apology addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, and a "Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew." He does not mention the Evangelists by name, but quotes frequently from the "Memoirs of the Apostles." These quotations give us a full picture of the life and teaching of Christ, corresponding substantially and often verbally with the account given in the Synoptic Gospels. They prove decisively that before the middle of the second century the account of Christ current among Christians was practically identical with that which we now possess in the Synoptic Gospels.

As an example, I may quote "Dialogue," chapter c: "It was written in the Gospel thus: 'All things have been committed to me by the Father, and no one knoweth the Father except the Son, neither the Son except the Father, and they to whomsoever the Son may reveal him.' He revealed then to us all those things which we have learnt from the Scriptures by his grace, who know that he is the firstbegotten of God, and was before all the creatures; and the son of the Patriarchs, since he took flesh of a virgin who was of their race, and condescended to be made a man without comeliness, dishonored, and liable to suffering. Hence it was that he said in his discourses when he spoke of his impending passion, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the Pharisees and the scribes, and be crucified, and rise again the third day.' He called himself the Son of Man then, either from his birth by a virgin, who was, as I have said, of the race of David, and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham; or because Adam was the father of him and of those here recounted, from whom Mary derives her descent. . . . And one of his disciples, who was before called Simon, he surnamed Peter, because he recognized him to be Christ the Son of God, according to the revelation of his Father. And we, seeing him to be described in the memoirs of his apostles as the Son of God, and calling him the Son, have perceived that he is even before all creatures, having proceeded from the Father by his power and will."

We have now found decisive documentary evidence that in the latter half of the second century accounts of the life and teaching of Christ, substantially identical with the Four Gospels we now possess, were accepted throughout the Roman empire by all Christians with perfect confidence as written by two apostles and two companions of apostles. The quotations from Papias, though not equal in value to those from works still extant, prove that the opinion of Irenæus about the authorship of the Gospels was much older than his own day. That these anonymous documents were everywhere accepted as written by four definite men, and that no other authors were ever suggested, affords a strong presumption that this universal belief was correct. For the absence of any suggestion of other authors' names cannot otherwise be accounted for. Moreover, whatever may be said about authorship, the abundant quotations in Justin afford a strong presumption that the picture of Christ given in the Synoptic Gospels is historically correct.

This last presumption is raised to complete certainty by examination of the contents of the Synoptic Gospels. We soon find that they present, compared one with another, an identical picture of Christ. They represent him as claiming frequently and solemnly to be "the Son of God": *e. g.*, Matthew iii, 17; Mark i, 11; Luke iii, 22, and elsewhere. The significance of this title is attested by a parable recorded in Matthew xxi, 33-41; Mark xii, 1-11; Luke xx, 9-18, where Christ contrasts himself as the Son with the prophets who were only servants. By this contrast he claims a relation to God infinitely higher than that of the greatest of his predecessors. A young Syrian artisan claims, as recorded in Matthew xi, 27-30, that he only, and those taught by him, know God; and calls to himself all the weary and heavily laden, and promises to give them rest. And he announces that in the day of days, when the best of men will stand at the bar of God and be judged, he will sit upon his throne and pronounce judgment on all. Such claims are never found, in the whole literature of the world, as made

by man or for man, except by and for Jesus of Nazareth. The evidence we have been considering proves that this conception of Christ was accepted everywhere with complete confidence in the middle of the second century.

The same conception of Christ is embodied also in the epistles which we have already traced to the pen of Paul in the middle of the first century. He also speaks of him as the "own Son" of God, and the future Judge of the World; and goes beyond the synoptists in calling him the Creator of the World. Moreover, the Synoptic Gospels are manifestly independent of the Epistles of Paul. For the distinctive phraseology and modes of thought of these last, *e. g.*, the phrase "in Christ," the believer's death, burial, and resurrection with Christ, Justification through Faith, Adoption, are conspicuously absent from the first three Gospels. Unquestionably, in them we have a company of independent witnesses about Christ. Their independence of Paul, viewed in connection with the deep, underlying harmony between him and them, is complete proof that they are a correct reflection of the impression made by Christ on his immediate followers. And, unless we are prepared to believe that the men who gained for Christ the homage of the world were utterly deluded about the dignity of their Master and his relation to God, we must accept the Synoptic Gospels as substantially correct delineations of the historic reality of the Founder of Christianity.

If we accept the Synoptic Gospels as true accounts of the life and teaching of Christ, we need not hesitate to accept, in the absence of valid contrary evidence, the unanimous testimony of the early Christian writers about their authorship. It will, however, be noticed that the proof of their trustworthiness just given in outline renders comparatively unimportant the question of their authorship. It is sufficient for us to know that they are correct portraits of Christ.

Touching the traditional authors of the Synoptic Gospels, not much is known. Irenæus speaks, *e. g.*, "Heresies," Book III, ix, 1, of the First Gospel as written by "Matthew the Apostle." In each of the lists given in Mark iii, 16-19, Luke vi, 14-16, Acts i, 13, we find the name of Matthew; and in Matthew x, 3, we read of Matthew the publican or tax-gatherer. In Matthew ix, 9-13, we read of his call, and of a feast he gave to Christ. In Mark ii, 13-17, Luke v, 27-32, we have accounts of the calling of a publican named Levi and of a feast given by him. The very close similarity leaves no room to doubt that he was identical with the Apostle Matthew. In Mark ii, 14, we read that he was son of Alphæus. No further information about him can be gleaned from the New Testament, and all later traditions are worthless. The whole tone of the First Gospel, as compared with the rest of the New Testament, reveals a writer in whom the moral teaching of Christ occupied a larger place than the distinctive features of the Gospel. The spirit of the whole finds utterance in Matthew vii, 21: "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

An early and apparently unanimous tradition asserts that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, *i. e.*, not in the language of David and Isaiah but in the Aramaic current in our Lord's day, of which we have specimens in Matthew xxvii, 46, Mark v, 41, vii, 34, xv, 34. But this tradition involves questions which cannot be discussed here. No Aramaic copy can now claim to be the original Gospel according to St. Matthew.

In Acts xii, 12, we read that, when Peter was liberated from prison, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark, and, in verse 25, that, when Barnabas and Paul returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, they took with them this same Mark. He went with Paul and Barnabas, as an attendant, on their missionary journey; but left them at Perga in Pamphilia: so Acts xiii, 6, 13. Barnabas, as we learn from chapter xv, 37, wished to take him on another missionary journey; but Paul refused. Barnabas and Mark, as we read in verse 39, then sailed together to Cyprus, while Paul took Silas on his second missionary

journey. By a remarkable coincidence, Mark, a cousin of Barnabas, sends greetings in Colossians iv, 10. This not only accounts for the partiality of Barnabas for Mark, but is pleasant evidence that the latter was restored to the favor of Paul. In Philemon, 24, the apostle speaks of Mark and others as "fellow-workers." Still more definitely he says in II. Timothy iv, 11, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is useful to me for ministering," *i. e.*, for such friendly service as he rendered on the first missionary journey. In I. Peter v, 13, referring probably to the same man, the writer speaks of "Mark, my son." From all this we learn that in the apostolic circle was one known by the name of Mark, whose mother had at one time a house in Jerusalem. And, in the absence of any other name, we may infer with much probability that he was the Mark to whom a unanimous tradition referred the writing of the Second Gospel. This inference is confirmed by unanimous tradition which connects both the Second Gospel and Mark with Peter. Eusebius, in his "Church History," Book III, xxxix, quotes Papias and John the presbyter as calling Mark the "interpreter of Peter" when writing down the words and works of Christ. So say Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. The Third Gospel is indisputably by the author of the Book of Acts. Its authorship will, therefore, be discussed in Chapter III.

Touching the time and place of writing of the Synoptic Gospels, we know nothing definite. But the hope of our Lord's early return which finds expression in Matthew xvi, 28, and less clearly in chapter xxiv, Mark xiii, Luke xxi, proves decisively that these Gospels were not written after the generation which had heard Christ had passed entirely away. A later writer would certainly have guarded the words of Christ against misapprehension. An example of such guarding, we have in John xxi, 23. This sure indication of the very early date of the first three Gospels is of utmost value.

More important than their precise date is the mutual relation of these Gospels. For their close similarity in contents, order, and even in phrasology proves that they are not independent. Either some two of the evangelists have followed to some extent the guidance of a third, modifying here and there and adding other matter, or all three have drawn from a common source. Perhaps the latter suggestion is more likely; and if it be correct there seems reason to believe that this common source is reproduced most fully in the Second Gospel. Probably the traditions of the words and works of Christ, which must have been of infinite value in the infant Church, crystalized early into definite literary form; and out of these grew, in the hands of careful writers, and by the method described in Luke i, 1-4, the Gospels we now possess. These survived, while some other similar works passed away, and obtained unanimous acceptance in the Church as authoritative records of the life and teaching of Christ. And their deep, underlying harmony with the epistles which we have traced by indisputable evidence to the pen of Paul, and with the rest of the New Testament, is complete proof that these records are historically true.

CHAPTER III.

THE BOOK OF ACTS.

THE writer of the Book of Acts claims to have written an earlier work "about all things which Jesus began both to do and to teach." That both works are addressed to someone named Theophilus, suggests at once that the writer refers to the Third Gospel. And that both works were written by Luke, whom Paul speaks of in Colossians iv, 14, as "the beloved physician" and refers to again in Philemon, 24, II. Timothy iv, 11, is the unanimous and confident testimony of the early writers already quoted in this Introduction.

As an example I may quote Eusebius, "Church History," Book III, iv, 6: "Luke, who was born at Antioch, and by profession a physician, being for the most part connected with Paul and familiarly acquainted with the rest of the apostles, has left us proofs of the art of healing souls which he obtained from these men, in two God-inspired [same word as in II. Timothy iii, 16] books; the Gospel which he professes to have written as it was handed over to him by 'those who from the beginning became eyewitnesses and servants of the Word,' all whom he declares that from the beginning he has followed; and the Acts of the Apostles which he 'composed, not from hearing, but having observed with his own eyes.'" Abundant similar references are found in the works of Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria.

Irenæus, who frequently quotes both works as written by Luke, calls attention, in Book III, xiv, 1, to the remarkable fact that, in the account of Paul's first journey from Troas to Philippi, and again in that of his journeys from Philippi to Jerusalem and from Jerusalem to Rome, we have the first person plural, *we* and *us*, implying that the writer was with Paul. This is complete proof that Irenæus had before him the narrative of Paul's journeys in a form practically the same as we now possess in the Book of Acts. Irenæus also identifies the writer with Luke who is mentioned in II. Timothy iv, 11, Colossians iv, 14, and calls him a fellow-laborer of Paul, as in Philemon, 24. In the "Fragment of Muratori" both works are attributed to Luke, who is called a physician.

That these anonymous writings were thus universally accepted before the close of the second century as by Luke, and that so far as we know no other author was ever suggested, is clear proof that they were current early in the century, and affords strong presumption that they came actually from the pen of Luke. For it is not easy otherwise to account for this universal tradition. This argument is not weakened by the fact that many centuries later, as we learn from the questions of Photius, who, however, himself accepted Luke as the author, the Book of Acts was by some attributed to Clement, by others to Barnabas, and by others to Luke. For, when the lapse of time had weakened the force of early tradition, the mere absence of the author's name sufficiently accounts for the diversity of opinion.

That the Book of Acts was written by a companion of Paul, is strongly confirmed by the use of the first person plural in Acts xvi, 10-17, xx, 5-15, xxi, 1-18, xxvii, 1, 2, xxviii, 11-16, already mentioned as noticed by Irenæus. For it proves that the work was written either by an eyewitness or by a deceiver. And it is in the last degree unlikely that a deceiver would invent this unobtrusive indication of the writer's presence. So slight an indication has the ring of truth. Moreover, that the Epistles of Paul are not mentioned in the Book of Acts is absolute proof of its early date. For, after Paul's death, his letters became too famous to be omitted in a narrative of his life; whereas, while he was living, they would seem less important.

The Book of Acts renders us immense service by giving a consecutive narrative of very important events which are referred to casually in the letters of Paul. These casual references

enable us to test its truthfulness. A portion of this evidence has been already adduced in our discussion, in Chapter I, of the genuineness of the Epistles to the Corinthians, Romans, and Thessalonians, and, to this, much more might be added. The letters of Paul abound in references to matter of fact in subtle agreement with the Book of Acts, an agreement which bears indisputable marks of truth. This confirmatory proof would not be invalidated by small contradictions, even were such detected; for errors about matters of fact, and especially about small details which do not come under their own observation, are easily accounted for even in reliable witnesses by the imperfection of all human observation and research. But frequently the concurrence of witnesses who singly are utterly unreliable, produces complete conviction of the truth of that which they narrate; because not otherwise can their concurrence be explained. Of this, our courts of law afford daily examples. Consequently, in weighing up coincidences and apparent contradictions, we cannot set one against the other. We must accept the hypothesis which best accounts for the whole case. And, when only one explanation of the facts is conceivable, we are compelled to accept this as true. Of the evidence before us, the only satisfactory explanation is that the letters were actually written by Paul, and that in the Book of Acts we have a trustworthy account of his work.

The force of the above argument can be felt only by careful personal study of the New Testament. But I may call attention to the harmonious picture of Paul himself as given in his own letters and in the Book of Acts, and to the picture of the Galilean Apostles as given there and in the Gospels, this latter being made the more remarkable by the new inspiration which fell upon them after the death of Christ. Compare also the prominence given to the resurrection of Christ in Acts i, 22, ii, 31, 32, iii, 15, iv, 10, etc., and in I. Corinthians xv, 13-21; also the doctrine of Justification through Faith, which is not found in the New Testament except from the pen or lips of Paul, in Acts xiii, 39, and in Galatians ii, 16; Romans iii, 26, 28, 30. Internal evidence, of which only a small part has been adduced here, affords abundant proof of the truthfulness of the narrative of the Book of Acts; and confirms, in a manner sufficient to exclude all doubt, the unanimous testimony of the early Christian writers that both the Third Gospel and the Book of Acts were written by Luke, a companion of Paul.

Touching the precise date of these documents, we have no decisive evidence. The writer does not profess, as we learn from Luke i, 2, to have personally known Christ, but claims to have derived his information from eyewitnesses. We must, therefore, put him in the second generation of the early Christians. And this is confirmed by the fact that he claims, as we have seen, to have been a companion of Paul on his second and third missionary journeys and on his voyage to Rome, and in II. Timothy iv, 11, at the close of Paul's life, we find that Luke was with him. That in Colossians iv, 10, 11, Paul sends greeting from some whom he describes as the only Jews who have been helpful to him; and afterward, in verse 14, sends greeting from "Luke, the beloved physician," suggests that this last was a Gentile. If so, he is the only writer of the New Testament whom we know to have been such.

The Book of Acts enables us not only to allot some of the letters of Paul to the periods of his life at which they were written, but approximately to fix their dates in reference to contemporaneous history. Our aids in this study are sundry references to public men and events.

From Acts xxiv, 27, we learn that, some two years after Paul's arrest at Jerusalem, Felix was succeeded by Festus. Now, Josephus says, in his "Antiquities," Book XX, viii, 9, that Felix, after his recall, was followed to Rome and accused there by the leading Jews of Cæsarea; and would certainly have been punished but for his brother Pallas, whom Nero then held in honor. From Tacitus, "Annals," Book XIV, lxxv, we learn that Pallas died in 62 A. D., as was believed, poisoned by Nero; and the order of the narrative suggests that this was not later than midsummer. Therefore, if these notes of time be correct, the summer of Felix's recall

was not later than 61 A. D. Again, after narrating the recall of Felix, Josephus says that through the influence of Burrus two prominent Syrians of Cæsarea gained from Nero a letter placing the Jewish residents there under disadvantage; and then goes on to speak of the arrival of Festus. But in his "Annals," Book XIV, li, at the beginning of his narrative of 62 A. D., Tacitus records the death of Burrus. Once more: Josephus says, in his "Wars," Book VI, v, 3, that during the Feast of Tabernacles, at the end of September, and seven years and five months before the siege of Jerusalem, and during the rule of Albinus, who, as we learn from the "Antiquities," Book XX, ix, 1, succeeded Festus, a peasant denounced woe upon Jerusalem. Now, as we learn from Josephus, "Wars," Books V, iii, 1, 2, VI, ix, 3, and from Tacitus, "Histories," Book V, x, the siege of Jerusalem began at the passover of 70 A. D. Consequently, late in September, 62 A. D., Albinus must have been governor and Festus already dead. And since, as we read in "Antiquities," Book XX, ix, 1, Nero did not send Albinus to Judea as governor till he heard that Festus was dead, the summer in which Paul stood before Festus could not have been later than 61 A. D. The concurrence of these notes of time is fair proof that Felix was recalled not later than 61 A. D., and, if so, Paul was arrested not later than 59 A. D.

From Acts xxi, 38, we learn that, some time before Paul's arrest, an Egyptian made a sedition and led out into the wilderness some 4,000 men. This incident is narrated by Josephus ("Wars," Book II, xiii, 5), as occurring in the time of Felix, after Nero had made him governor of Judea. Now, Nero began to reign in 54 A. D. Consequently, the revolt of the Egyptian was later than this. Yet it was evidently some time before Paul's arrest. This must, therefore, have been some years later than 54 A. D. Again, when Paul stood before Felix, the latter had, as we learn from Acts xxiv, 10, for "many years" been "judge unto this [Jewish] nation." Now, Felix was appointed governor, as we read in the "Antiquities," Book XX, vii, 1, when Claudius had reigned twelve years, *i. e.*, in 53 A. D. These two notes of time make it unlikely that Paul's arrest was earlier than the summer of 57 A. D.

Josephus tells us (in his "Life," Section 1) that he was born in the first year of Caligula, *i. e.*, in 37 A. D.; and adds (in Section 3) that in his twenty-sixth year (probably in the summer of 63 A. D., for only in spring and summer was sea-faring safe) he went to Rome to obtain release of some friends whom Felix, while governor, had sent there in bonds. His words imply or suggest that when he went to Rome Felix was no longer governor. Now, it is not likely that this journey would be delayed beyond two years after Felix's recall. And, if not, he must have been recalled not earlier than 61 A. D. Certainly this note of time makes it extremely unlikely that Felix was recalled earlier than the summer of 60 A. D. Moreover, in the dates of his own birth and his journey to Rome, Josephus' own words claim our confidence.

We have now found three indications that the recall of Felix was not later than 61 A. D. We found clear proof that it was not many years earlier than this; and we found a reliable note of time which made it almost inconceivable that he was recalled earlier than 60 A. D., and very unlikely that his recall was earlier than 61 A. D. Therefore, with such confidence as the scantiness of our materials, and their liability to error, warrant, we may accept this latter date as the most probable. That Felix was recalled several years before the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A. D., and that Paul was arrested several years after the accession of Nero in 54 A. D., is open to no doubt whatever. If we accept 61 A. D. as the probable date of the recall of Felix, we can, using this as a foundation, build up a chronology of the Book of Acts and of the Epistles of Paul.

Since Paul was two years in prison at Cæsarea, he must have been arrested at Jerusalem in the summer of 59 A. D., almost immediately after his return from his third missionary journey. If so, he left Ephesus, after the tumult, in the spring of 58 A. D., spent the summer in Macedonia, the winter following at Corinth, and the Easter of 59 A. D. at Philippi. Now, he was

some three years at Ephesus. We, therefore, infer that he arrived there in the summer of 55 A. D., the year after Nero's accession. In the spring of the same year, the most likely time for beginning a journey, he probably started from Antioch, as we read in Acts xviii, 23, on his third missionary tour. The "some time" spent at Antioch would doubtless include the winter of 54 A. D. And the journey described in Acts xviii, 18-22, may well have been accomplished during the previous summer; allowing us to suppose that Paul sailed from Corinth for Syria in the spring of the same year. If so, his sojourn at Corinth of more than eighteen months (see Acts xviii, 11) would include two winters and the intervening summer—in other words, he arrived there in the autumn of 52 A. D. And since on that, his second missionary journey, he was, as we infer from Galatians iv, 13, detained in Galatia by illness and founded churches there, we must suppose that he started from Antioch in the early spring. But before starting on this journey Paul spent, as we learn from Acts xv, 35, 36, some time at Antioch; during which time Peter came, and others from Jerusalem. This brings the date of the conference at Jerusalem to the previous year, 51 A. D. Reckoning back fourteen years, according to Galatians ii, 1, Paul's first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion must have been in 37 or 38 A. D., and his conversion three years earlier (Galatians i, 18)—about 35 A. D.

If this chronology be correct, the two letters to Thessalonica were written from Corinth in the autumn of 52 A. D.; those to Corinth, from Ephesus and Macedonia, in the spring and summer of 58 A. D.; and those to the Galatians and Romans from Corinth during the following winter. Apparently Paul's voyage to Rome began in the autumn after the arrival of Festus in Judea, *i. e.*, in 61 A. D. If so, he arrived at Rome early in 62 A. D.; and remained there in prison till 64 A. D. During this time, as we have seen, he wrote his letters to the Philippians, to the Colossians, Ephesians, and to Philemon. After this last date he was apparently set free, and visited Ephesus, Macedonia, and Crete; and wrote the First Epistle to Timothy and that to Titus. During the same interval of freedom, if we may trust the apparent reference in the Epistle of Clement of Rome, supported by tradition, he also visited Spain. A general tradition asserts that Paul was put to death in the reign of Nero, who died in June, 68 A. D. And we may suppose that the Second Epistle to Timothy was written shortly before the apostle's martyrdom.

The above scanty outline indicates the method of Biblical chronology, and the various notes of time referred to are strong confirmatory evidence of the trustworthiness of the documents in which they are found.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WRITINGS OF JOHN.

THAT the Fourth Gospel and what is known as the First Epistle of John were written by the Apostle John, was accepted without a shadow of doubt by all early Christian writers from the latter part of the second century onward. So Irenæus, "Heresies," Book III, i, 1: "Afterward (*i. e.*, after Matthew, Mark, and Luke) John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon his breast, himself published the Gospel during his residence at Ephesus, in Asia." Abundant quotations prove that he had before him the Fourth Gospel in a form practically the same as we now possess. In Book III, xi, 8, he argues: "It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout the world, and the 'pillar and ground' of the Church is the Gospel and the Spirit of Life, it is fitting that she should have four pillars breathing out immortality on every side and vivifying men afresh." This passage, taken in connection with many quotations from them, proves that in the days of Irenæus four Gospels, practically the same as we now possess, stood together above any other similar works as authoritative records of the works and words of Christ. In the "Fragment of Muratori," the Fourth Gospel is attributed to the disciple John, and the First Epistle is quoted as his. This unanimous reception of two anonymous documents, within a hundred years of the death of their alleged writer, is very strong presumptive proof of their authorship.

By Justin, no names of evangelists are given; but, as we have seen, the words of Christ are frequently quoted in a form practically the same as that given in the Synoptic Gospels. In his "First Apology," chapter lxi, we read, "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." This, though not a verbal quotation, proves that words practically the same as those in John iii, 3, were in the time of Justin attributed to Christ. In his "Dialogue with Trypho," chapter lxxxviii, we read, "As John sat by the Jordan and preached the Baptism of repentance, wearing only a girdle of skins and a garment of camel's hair, and eating nothing but locusts and wild honey, men supposed him to be the Christ; but he himself declared to them, '*I am not the Christ, but a voice of one crying; for there shall come after me he who is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.*'" The words in italics are found in John i, 20, 23. These, and some other less definite references, afford a strong presumption that the Fourth Gospel was then current. It is, however, worthy of note that the references by Justin to the Fourth Gospel are very few in comparison to his many quotations reproducing the words of Christ as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels.

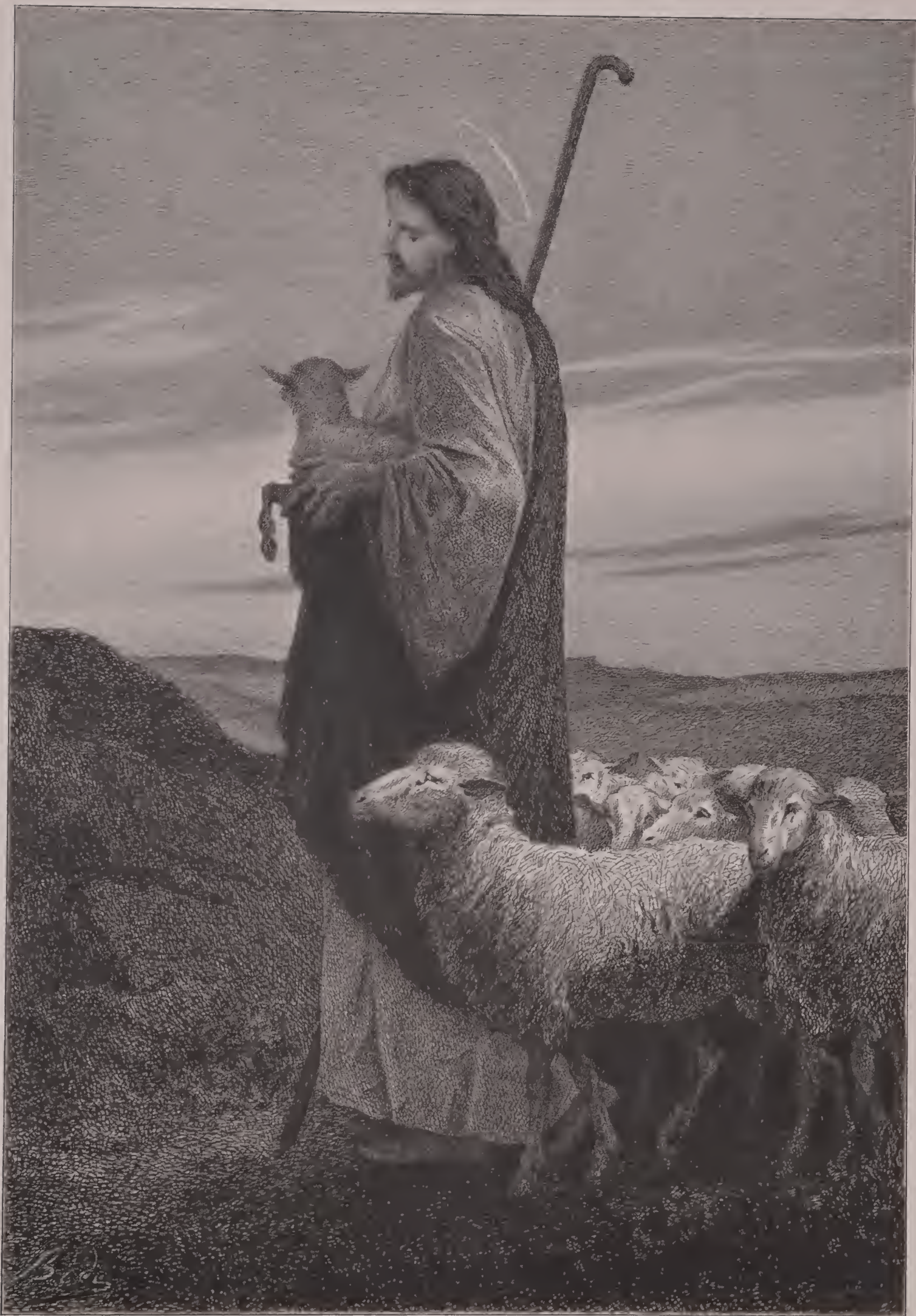
In the Fourth Gospel we find an accuracy of detail which reveals a trustworthy eye-witness. Notice especially the exact indications of time in John i, 29, 35, 39, 43, ii, 1, 13, iv, 43, v, 1, vi, 4, 22, vii, 2, 14, 37, x, 22, xi, 55, xii, 1, 12, xix, 31, xx, 19, 26, xxi, 14. The Synoptic Gospels are not without notes of time; but these are few compared to those just quoted. Indeed, the chronology of the life of Christ rests almost entirely on the Fourth Gospel. Notice, also, the many references to persons, and successive references to the same person. We have vivid delineations of character of many who would be altogether unknown to us, or known only by name, but for the Fourth Gospel. As examples I may quote Nicodemus in John iii, 1, vii, 50, xix, 39; Lazarus in chapters xi, 1, xii, 1, 10; and Nathanael in chapters

i, 46-50, xxi, 2. Many important details having every appearance of truth are found only in the Fourth Gospel: *e. g.*, the preliminary examination of Christ by Annas before he was sent to Caiaphas, as recorded in John xviii, 13-24. Sometimes the account given in the Fourth Gospel seems to differ from that given by the Synoptists: *e. g.*, the indications of the day of crucifixion given in John xviii, 28, xix, 31, compared with Mark xiv, 12. The force of these indications, and many others similar, can be felt only by personal study. To me they are complete proof that in the Fourth Gospel we have a most reliable narrative of the life of Christ.

Still more important is the theological teaching of the same document. For in the discourses of Christ therein contained, and especially in the frequent assertion that they who believe in Christ have eternal life, we find a necessary connecting link between Paul's doctrine of Justification through Faith and the actual teaching of Christ. For, if they who believe in Christ have already eternal life, then are they already justified; for, to the guilty, pardon is a condition of life. Had we only the discourses recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, Paul's conception of the Gospel would be an insoluble mystery. It would be the Gospel of Paul only, not of Christ. For it would lack historic foundation in the recorded words of Christ. But now all is explained. We can easily conceive that the Synoptic Gospels embody Christ's ordinary public teaching, which was for the greater part a reproduction and development of the moral teaching of the Old Testament. But together with this ordinary teaching he spoke, privately as to Nicodemus, and to the apostles on the night of his betrayal, or occasionally in public, as in the discourse at Capernaum recorded in John vi, 26-58, words setting forth the Gospel in its fullness. The teaching of the Synoptists was in some measure understood at the time, and is widely appreciated now. The words recorded in the Fourth Gospel could be understood, even by those who heard them, only when expounded by the Spirit promised to the disciples: and to this day they are sealed to many who value greatly the teaching of the other Gospels. But in all ages this Gospel has been rich spiritual nourishment to the most devout of the followers of Christ. The above internal evidence proves only the historical truthfulness of the Fourth Gospel. Other internal evidence affords wonderful confirmation of the unanimous and confident belief of the early Christian writers that it was written by the Apostle John.

In all lists of the apostles, Matthew x, 2, Mark iii, 17, Luke vi, 14, Acts i, 13, we read of John, a son of Zebedee: and in Mark v, 37, ix, 2, xiii, 3, xiv, 33, with their parallels, we find him associated with Peter and James, and sometimes Andrew, as an inner and more intimate circle within the circle of the apostles. In the Fourth Gospel, John is never mentioned; but we find an unnamed disciple occupying the place which in the Synoptics John holds. So John i, 41, where, of two disciples of the Baptist who followed Christ and were admitted to an intimate interview with him, the name only of one, Andrew, is given; also chapter xiii, 23, where we read, "there was reclining in the bosom of Jesus one of his disciples whom Jesus loved;" and chapter xviii, 15, 16, "there followed Jesus Simon Peter and another disciple. And that disciple was known to the high priest and went in with Jesus into the court of the high priest. But Peter was standing at the door outside. There went out, therefore, the other disciple, the acquaintance of the high priest, and spoke to the porter and brought in Peter." Similarly, chapter xix, 26, "Jesus then seeing his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, saith to his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then he saith to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her to his home." The same unnamed disciple whom Jesus loved is mentioned again in chapter xx, 2-5, as going with Peter to the grave of Christ, and again as being with some other disciples in Galilee when the risen Lord appeared to them. This unnamed disciple can be no other than the Apostle John.

We have now a remarkable phenomenon. Throughout the Fourth Gospel, one of the foremost of the apostles, though several times silently referred to, is never mentioned by name. This cannot be accidental. How is it explained? If the unanimous tradition of the early



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Christians be correct, further explanation is needless. The writer refused to insert his own name in his account of the words and works of Christ. If John did not write this Gospel, the omission of his name is inexplicable. No honest writer would omit it. And the only alternative, namely, that it was omitted by someone who wished to pass off his own work as that of the Apostle John, is disproved utterly by the intrinsic worth of the Fourth Gospel. Moreover, one who had this aim would indicate the writer more clearly.

A verse at the close of the Gospel, which is undoubtedly genuine, John xxi, 24, claims it as a work of the beloved apostle: "This is the disciple who testifies about these things and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true." This is also the easiest explanation of John xix, 26, 35, where, after mention of John as standing before the cross, we read, "And he that saw it hath borne witness; and his witness is true, and he knoweth that he says true things in order that ye may believe." With these last words compare chapter xx, 31: "These things are written in order that ye may believe."

An important confirmation of the historical truth both of the Fourth Gospel and of the Synoptics is the remarkable harmony in their delineations of the character and dignity of Christ, and of various other characters, *e. g.*, Peter, Martha, and Mary, and Judas the traitor.

To sum up: We have found in the writings of the early Christians, from the latter part of the second century onward, complete proof that throughout the Roman empire the Fourth Gospel was everywhere accepted without a shadow of doubt as written by the Apostle John. We have found in it a portrait of Christ fuller and loftier than that given in the rest of the New Testament, yet in close harmony with, and needful to explain, the portraits given by the Synoptists and by Paul; a portrait revealing the hand of a painter of the highest ability and character; and an account of the teaching of Christ which is a necessary link between the Gospel of Paul and the teaching attributed to Christ in the Synoptic Gospels. We have found in its narratives and delineations of character abundant indications of truthfulness and extreme accuracy such as could be found only in an eyewitness; and a remarkable set of phenomena which can be explained only as coming from the Apostle John. We may, therefore, accept with perfect confidence the unanimous testimony of the early Christian writers touching the authorship of the Fourth Gospel.

The only serious objection to the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel is that very strong external evidence exists asserting that the Book of Revelation was written by the Apostle John, while at the same time a wide difference in diction and modes of thought, and even in doctrine, makes very unlikely that both documents came from the same pen.

Eusebius, in his "Church History," Book III, xxv, speaks of "The Revelation of John, which some reject, but others rank among the genuine." He thus distinguishes it from "the holy quaternion of the Gospels, the Book of Acts, the Epistles of Paul, and the First Epistles of John and Peter." It is once quoted by Clement of Alexandria with the words, "as John says in the Apocalypse;" and several times without the writer's name. It is frequently quoted by Irenæus, as written by John, and confirmed by "those who saw John face to face." Justin, in his "Dialogue with Trypho," chapter lxxxi, writes: "A teacher of ours, whose name was John, one of the twelve apostles of Christ, foretold in a revelation which was made to him that those who believe in our Christ should pass a thousand years in Jerusalem, and that after that there should be a universal and, in a word, eternal resurrection of all men together, and then the judgment." On the other hand, the Book of Revelation was not included, as were all the books reckoned by Eusebius as undisputed, in the very early and valuable Peshito Syriac Version.

From the above evidence we learn that in some quarters the Book of Revelation was received, in the middle of the second century, as written by the Apostle John, but that it was not universally known and accepted, and that there were serious doubts about it even in the

time of Eusebius. It thus differs in external attestation from the books mentioned by Eusebius as universally and confidently accepted.

On the other hand, the Book of Revelation contains a number of uncouth grammatical forms, utterly unlike anything else in the New Testament and a marked contrast to the Fourth Gospel. The distinctive words and phrases which are so marked a feature of the Gospel and Epistle, *e. g.*, the word *believe* and the phrases *abide in him* and *life eternal*, are conspicuously absent. In spite of some subtle links of connection, such as the word *overcome* in I. John ii, 13, 14, and Revelation ii, 7, 11, 17, 26, the general tone and modes of thought are different. Very difficult is Revelation ii, 20, where eating idol sacrifices is classed with fornication: in complete contrast to I. Corinthians x, 27-29, Romans xiv, 14, and the whole tone of the Fourth Gospel. Throughout the Book of Revelation, truth is thrown into concrete and visible forms; in the Gospel it is ever embodied in abstract statement. A very remarkable difference between the two documents, and one very difficult to harmonize with their common authorship, is the conspicuous absence of the author's name both in the Gospel and First Epistle and the fewness of references to him even in narratives of events at which he was present, in contrast to the conspicuous mention of John four times, in Revelation i, 1, 4, 9, xxii, 8, and the references to himself in the first person in chapters i, 10, 12, iv, 1, 2, v, 4, 5, vi, 1, 2, 3, 5, and throughout the book; and especially the personal incidents in chapters vii, 13, 14, x, 8-11, xvii, 6, 7, xix, 9, 10, xxi, 9, 10, xxii, 8-10. These differences create a difficulty which I cannot remove. But they do not overturn the abundant and decisive evidence adduced above, proving that the Fourth Gospel was written by the Apostle John. Even if we admit that the two documents could not come from the same pen, we should prefer the attestation of the Gospel, consisting as it does of the unanimous and confident testimony of the early Christian writers, and supported by very strong internal evidence, rather than that of the Book of Revelation which, though embracing external evidence earlier than that for the Gospel, was not unanimous and is supported by very little internal evidence.

But we are not driven to this alternative. Moreover, the strong external evidence for the authorship of the Book of Revelation must not be lightly set aside. And it need not be. Two suppositions are possible. It may be admitted that the two documents are not from the same man at the same time. But an ancient tradition asserts that the Apostle John lived to an extreme old age. So Irenæus, Book III, iii, 4: "The church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having John remaining among them till the times of Trajan": *i. e.*, till 98 A. D. The absence of any reference to Paul's work in Asia forbids us to place the Book of Revelation much earlier than the death of Paul, say 66 A. D. This leaves time, however, for the two works to have been written nearly thirty years apart. If, as seems likely, these thirty years were spent in a Greek city like Ephesus, this new and continued environment may in some measure account for the differences between the two documents.

Another supposition seems to me more likely. We need not assume that these Greek documents were actually written by the hand and pen of the Galilean apostle. Paul used an amanuensis (see Romans xvi, 22). John, writing in a language which was not his mother tongue, may have had literary help. Let us suppose that he had a friend and disciple, with facile pen, to whom he gave an exact account of the events of the life of Christ which he desired to have recorded, and of the profounder teaching of Christ about himself which had found insufficient embodiment in the Synoptic Gospels; and let us suppose that this friend grasped intelligently and firmly this inner and higher Gospel of Christ. Under the direction and supervision of the apostle, he may have written the Fourth Gospel. The Book of Revelation may have been written in a similar way, but by another writer of another stamp, and at an earlier time. If so, both documents might fairly be attributed to the Apostle John. In any case, abundant evidence, external and internal, compels us to accept the Fourth Gospel as a

very early, and trustworthy, and most valuable account of the life and teaching of Christ. Other evidence attests the very early date of the Book of Revelation. And its contents, as a unique type of New Testament teaching, give to it unique interest.

Neither document contains reliable indications of time or place of writing. As containing a more highly developed conception of the dignity of Christ, and of his relation to God, most scholars place the Fourth Gospel near to the close of the Apostle's life. If the Book of Revelation be from the same writer, it must be much earlier. This supposition contradicts Irenæus who, in his "Heresies," Book V, xxx, 3, says that it was written "toward the end of the reign of Domitian," who died in 96 A. D. This is a testimony to the extreme old age attained by the apostle; but it is not decisive as a proof of so small a detail as the date of a book.

The Book of Revelation claims to have been written at Patmos, an island in the Ægean Sea. The Fourth Gospel has no indication of date. A wide-spread and early tradition connects the last years of the Apostle John with Ephesus. And, if so, he may have written his Gospel there. So Irenæus, Book III, i, 1: "John the disciple of the Lord, who reclined on his breast, himself published the Gospel, while dwelling in Ephesus, of Asia."

That the First Epistle also was written by the Apostle John is attested by the writers quoted above for the Gospel, and by others earlier. Eusebius, in his "Church History," Book III, xxxix, says of Papias, a writer who must have lived in the early part of the second century, that "he used testimonies from the First Epistle of John." In Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians, chapter vii, we read, "Everyone that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in flesh is Antichrist": in close, and almost verbal, agreement with I. John iv, 2, 3. This external evidence is strongly confirmed by both thought and diction, and contents of the epistle. It is a series of pious meditations on the words recorded in the Gospel as spoken by Christ. But the strength and development of thought forbids the suggestion that the one is a mere imitation of the other. As an example of valuable development, I may quote the important double assertion in I. John iv, 8 and 16, that "God is love."

The short Second and Third Epistles of John are not supported by the early and unanimous, and confident external evidence quoted above for the First Epistle. But Clement of Alexandria, in his "Miscellanies," Book II, xv, speaks of John's "larger epistle"; thus implying shorter epistles or epistle; and they are apparently mentioned in the "Fragment of Muratori." Internal evidence seems to me to support their Johannine authorship. The Third Epistle gives an interesting, though by no means favorable, picture of early church life. The reasons which lead us to place the Gospel late in the Apostle's life are valid also for the First Epistle. Touching the time and place of the shorter epistles, we know nothing.

To sum up: We may accept with perfect confidence the Fourth Gospel as a very early, and trustworthy, and valuable account of what Jesus said and did, and as almost certainly coming directly or indirectly from the Apostle John; also the First Epistle of John, certainly, and probably the Second and Third, as by the same writer; and the wonderful Book of Revelation as coming, by another channel, from the same ultimate apostolic source.

CHAPTER V.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THE great value and attractiveness of this epistle are universally recognized. It is, after the Epistle to the Romans, the most orderly and logical book in the New Testament. The writer proves successively that Christ is greater than angels, than Moses, and than the priesthood, temple, and sacrifices of the Old Covenant. And we remember that the Law was ordained by angels, in the hand of Moses, as mediator, and that in the ancient ritual the Law held abiding place before the eyes of Israel. On each of these three points of comparison and contrast is based a practical exhortation. The work is evidently designed to encourage the fainting hearts of Jewish Christians.

There are passages in the Epistle of Clement of Rome which suggest that the writer had seen the Epistle to the Hebrews. Nothing is said about it in the "Fragment of Muratori," which mentions by name all thirteen Epistles of Paul. It is not quoted, though it is possibly referred to, by Irenæus. Eusebius, in his "Church History," Book VI, xiv, quotes Clement of Alexandria as saying, in a work now lost, that "the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by Paul to the Hebrews in the Hebrew tongue, but that it was carefully translated by Luke and published among the Greeks." He quotes, in his "Church History," Book VI, xxv, Origen as saying that "the thoughts are the apostle's, but the diction and phraseology belong to someone who has recorded what the apostle said, and as one who noted down at his leisure what his master dictated. If, then, any church considers this epistle as coming from Paul, let him be commended for this; for neither did those ancient men deliver it as such without cause. But who it was that really wrote the epistle, God knows. The account, however, which has been current before us is, according to some, that Clement, who was bishop of Rome, wrote the epistle; according to others, that it was written by Luke, who wrote the Gospel and the Acts." We notice at once the difference between these doubtful and varying testimonies and the unanimous and confident attestation, quoted in Chapter I, that the thirteen epistles which bear the name of Paul were actually written by him.

Internal evidence does not favor the Pauline authorship. In chapter ii, 3, we read of "salvation which began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard;" in marked contrast to Paul who says, in Galatians i, 12, that the Gospel he preached was not received from man. The general style is very different from that of Paul. We notice, also, the absence of the distinctive Pauline phraseology and modes of thought, *e. g.*, justification through faith, adoption, according to flesh, according to Spirit, in Christ, crucified, dead, buried, risen with Christ, the Church represented as the body of Christ, and many others. Some quotations from the Old Testament suggest irresistibly that the writer did not know Hebrew, *e. g.*, Hebrews ii, 7, x, 5; quotations which, in this respect, have no parallel in the acknowledged writings of Paul. In view of these marked internal differences, the doubtful external testimony is insufficient to prove that the epistle was written by Paul.

On the other hand, we have no concurrence of evidence sufficient to justify our ascription of it to any other definite writer. Some have suggested Luke, others Apollos. But these are little more than plausible guesses. The writer, able and brilliant as he was, remains unknown. Indications of time and place of writing are very scanty. From Hebrews ii, 3, we have already learned that the writer belonged to the second generation of Christians. This agrees with chapter xiii, 23, "our brother Timothy is set free, with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you." This implies that the letter was written during the lifetime of Timothy by one of his

friends. With these notes of time agree the tone, and contents, and apparent environment of the epistle, which agree far more with the rest of the New Testament than with the ages following.

Internal evidence leaves no room to doubt that the epistle was originally written in Greek. Its intrinsic worth and immense superiority to any early Christian writings outside the New Testament give it, in spite of our ignorance of its author, a sure place in the Sacred Writings of the New Covenant.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

OF this epistle we find no mention in the "Fragment of Muratori." The earliest clear reference to it is in Irenæus, Book IV, xvi, 2, where we have James ii, 23, word for word, but without any reference to the writer. Origen is the earliest who mentions the author's name. He quotes it frequently as by "James," by "James the Apostle," by "James, brother of the Lord." So his commentary on John xix, 6, on Romans iv, 8, ix, 24; selections on Psalms cxviii (cxix), 153, xxxi (xxx), 5, etc. Eusebius, in his "Church History," Book III, xxv, says: "Of the disputed books, but nevertheless known to many, the so-called Epistle of James is current, and that of Jude, and the Second Epistle of Peter." Jerome, 340-420 A. D., writes, in his "Illustrious Men," chapter ii: "James, called the Lord's brother, surnamed the Just, wrote one epistle only, which is among the seven catholic epistles; which is also said to have been published by another in his name, though it gradually obtained authority in process of time." Evidently Jerome himself accepted the epistle as written by James, the Lord's brother; but acknowledges that others had doubts. The Epistle of James was also contained in the Peshito Syriac Version, which dates, perhaps, from the fourth century.

The above somewhat scanty external attestation receives strong support from internal evidence. The epistle claims to have been written by "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." This suggests an author so well known that the mere mention of his name was a sufficient designation. That, although a servant of Christ, he writes to the twelve tribes in the dispersion, suggests that he was a Jew and had special relations to Jewish Christians.

Such a man is mentioned in Galatians i, 19, as seen by Paul at Jerusalem: "Other of the apostles I did not see except James, the brother of the Lord." In chapter ii, 9, his name is put before those of Cephas and John, as one who seemed to be a pillar. In verse 12, certain Judaizers are said to have "come from James." This does not imply that James sent them, or shared their sentiments; but that they looked up to him as in some sense their leader.

In complete harmony with the above, we read in Acts xii, 17, that Peter, when liberated from prison at Jerusalem, sent a message to "James," the simple name being sufficient to designate the person referred to. In chapter xv, 13, at the conference at Jerusalem, "James" speaks last. In chapter xxi, 18, surrounded by the elders at Jerusalem, "James" welcomes Paul, and advises him to pay deference to Jewish zeal for the Law by joining in the purification of four men who had a vow. Evidently, at the head of the church at Jerusalem stood a man known as "James."

To the same refers Josephus, who, in his "Antiquities," Book XX, ix, 1, describes the martyrdom of "James, the brother of Jesus who is called Christ."

To this brother of the Lord, as we have seen, Origen attributes the epistle before us. This tradition is in complete harmony with its contents. Although written by one who holds "the



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faith of our Lord Jesus Christ," it is farther from the standpoints of Paul and of John, and nearer to that of a pious Jew, than is any other part of the New Testament. It has much, both in phraseology and mental standpoint, in common with the First Gospel. This agrees with the position of James in the Book of Acts as the leader of the church at Jerusalem. His deep spiritual sympathy with all that was good in the Old Covenant made him a most valuable conservative element in the difficult transition from the Old to the New.

Another mark of the theological truth of this epistle, and, therefore, inferentially of its apostolic origin, is its deep underlying and essential agreement with the teaching of Paul. Written from an altogether different standpoint, it never contradicts the Gospel of Paul. In this respect it is a conspicuous contrast to the Jewish-Christian writings of the second century.

This subtle and deep harmony between the teaching of this epistle and what we know about James, and the importance of the theological standpoint here expounded, as an essential part of the exposition of the Gospel, justify our acceptance of it with confidence, in spite of its weak external attestation, as a genuine work of James, the Lord's brother.

The scantiness of the references to the epistle by the writers of the second century is easily accounted for by the fact that, whereas they were Gentiles, it was written to Jews; and written not to any one church which would be its special guardian, as Tertullian says about the epistles of Paul, but to Jews scattered over the world.

That James does not venture to call himself in this epistle a brother of our Lord, need not surprise us. He knew too well that bodily relation to Christ gave no preëminence in the kingdom of God.

In Matthew xiii, 55, Mark vi, 3, we read of brothers of Christ associated with his mother and bearing the names of "James, and Joses, and Simon, and Jude." The mention of James is an important coincidence with the passages quoted above. Since Jesus was, as we learn from Luke ii, 7, Mary's firstborn, James and his brothers and (Matthew xiii, 55) sisters must have been either younger children of Mary or older children of Joseph by an earlier wife. Between these hypotheses, which have been much discussed, the evidence before us does not warrant an assured judgment. In other words, we do not know whether the writer of this epistle was an older or younger brother of Christ.

From John vii, 5, we learn that six months before his death his brothers did not believe in him. But immediately after his ascension, as we learn from Acts i, 14, they were closely associated with his followers. In remarkable harmony with this change, we read in I. Corinthians xv, 7, that the risen Lord appeared to James. This appearance probably removed all doubt from the mind of James and his brothers, and led them to accept as their Lord one whose bodily nearness may have concealed from them his divine glory.

The epistle contains no sure indications of date. But that James uses, in chapter ii, 14-26, language which has an appearance of contradicting Paul, suggests very strongly that when he wrote he had not seen the Epistles to the Galatians and Romans. Otherwise, he would probably have been careful to remove even the appearance of contradiction. This slight indication of time is, perhaps, sufficient to justify our assuming a comparatively early date for the epistle. Since we never read of James, after the death of Christ, except at Jerusalem, this letter to Jews scattered throughout the world was written probably from the mother city of their race.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EPISTLES OF PETER AND JUDE.

THE First Epistle claims to have been written by "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ." That this epistle was known to Polycarp, whom Irenæus speaks of as having "conversed with many who had seen Christ," is proved by several verbal coincidences far too close to be accidental. Eusebius, in his "Church History," Book III, xxxix, says that Papias (in a work extant in the time of Eusebius, but now lost) used the Epistle of Peter. It is not mentioned in the "Fragment of Muratori." Irenæus quotes it, but not with anything like the frequency with which he quotes the Four Gospels, the Book of Acts, and the Epistles of Paul. So "Heresies," Book IV, ix, 2, we read: "Peter says in his epistle, 'whom not seeing ye love,' etc." Express quotations, but not many of them, are found in Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. Origen quotes it often, and by name. Eusebius, in his "Church History," Book III, xxv, placed it among the books "acknowledged as genuine." And after his day it occupied an uncontested place in the Christian Scriptures.

This short and general epistle does not contain any internal indications of authorship like those which confirmed so powerfully the Epistles of Paul, or, indeed, like those adduced above for the Epistle of James. Although Peter occupied so conspicuous a place, both in the Gospels and the Book of Acts, where we find long addresses from his lips, we cannot point to any coincidences in his character or teaching sufficient to identify him with the writer of this epistle. Nor, as we shall see, does the Second Epistle help us. On the other hand, the epistle contains nothing against this identification. It is, while lacking the more distinctive features of Paul's teaching, perceptibly colored by his phraseology and thought, and even by that of James. But, in spite of this intellectual dependence on others, the spiritual earnestness, and the glow of feeling which burns on every page, give to this epistle a special value of its own. It is not unworthy of the illustrious writer by whom it claims to have been written.

The only alternative open to us is, either that the epistle was written by the Apostle Peter, or that it was written by someone else who deliberately palmed it off as his. No such person could have written a letter so helpful to the spiritual and moral life as this has been; nor is it likely that such a letter would have gained the early attestation quoted above. In view of the whole case we may accept the epistle before us, with reasonable confidence, as having been written by the heroic leader of the Galilean apostles.

That no mention is made of Paul, in a letter to churches founded by him, suggests very strongly that it was written after Paul ceased to labor among them, *i. e.*, some time after his arrest at Jerusalem.

Whether the name Babylon in I. Peter v, 13, denotes the city on the Euphrates, or some other city, *e. g.*, Rome, is not certain. A widespread and trustworthy tradition connects the death of Peter with the city of Rome. And this suggests that to this city the writer refers. But the evidence is insufficient for a reliable judgment.

The First Epistle of Peter is of immense value, not only as a rich means of spiritual edification, but as proving that teaching practically identical with that of Paul and John was common to various sections of the early Church.

The Second Epistle claims to have been written by "Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ." The spelling of the word *Symeon* is found, from the lips of James, in Acts xv, 14. The writer claims, in a passage referring evidently (compare II. Peter i, 17, with Matthew xvii, 5) to the transfiguration of Christ, to have been an eyewitness of the greatness

of Christ. He speaks, in chapter iii, 1, of the letter he was then writing as a "Second Epistle." Evidently the writer claims to be the Apostle Peter.

We have no quotation of, or clear reference to, the epistle till Origen, in the third century, of whose works a Latin translation quotes it several times. But the correctness of the translation is somewhat doubtful. Eusebius, in his "Church History," Book VI, xxv, quotes Origen as saying "Peter . . . has left one epistle undisputed; perhaps, also, a second, for it is doubted." In his "Church History," Book III, iii, Eusebius writes: "One Epistle of Peter, called his first, is universally received. This the elders of ancient times have quoted in their writings as undoubtedly authentic. But that called his Second Epistle, we have been informed, has not been received into the Canon. Nevertheless, as appearing to many useful, it has been carefully studied with the other writings." So, again, Book III, xxv. Jerome says, in his work on "Illustrious Men," chapter i, "Simon Peter wrote two epistles which are called catholic; the second of which most persons deny to be his, on account of its disagreement in style from the first." It had no place in the Old Syriac Version. From the above we see that the external attestation for the Second Epistle of Peter is much less than for any other part of the New Testament.

Nor is the external evidence strengthened by the contents of the epistle. We find in it no appreciable coincidences, in diction or modes of thought, with the First Epistle. The difference is more conspicuous than the similarity. On the other hand, between the epistle before us and that of Jude are close coincidences in matter, order, and diction which prove that one document is, in part, copied from the other, or both from a common source. Most scholars think that the Epistle of Jude is the original and that of Peter the copy. But this is a question of great difficulty. Even if it were admitted, it would not necessarily disprove the genuineness of the epistle. For even an apostle might reproduce the thought and diction of another. And we have seen that the First Epistle does not reveal special originality. In view of the late and doubting external attestation, unsupported as it is by internal evidence, we cannot claim this epistle as certainly written by the Apostle Peter. On the other hand, its genuineness is not disproved. The authorship of the epistle remains for the present an unsolved problem.

The writer of the Epistle of Jude, whose name might be spelled Judas or Judah, calls himself "brother of James." This designation recalls at once the famous man who, as we have seen, occupied a unique place at the head of the Church at Jerusalem, and who is also called "brother of the Lord." By an interesting coincidence, in each of the lists of our Lord's brothers given in Matthew xiii, 55, and Mark vi, 3, we find the name "Jude." In the lists of apostles given in Luke vi, 16, Acts i, 13, we find (translating literally) a name "Jude of James." But these words do not determine whether the man referred to was brother or son of James. We have no reason to identify the Apostle Jude with Jude our Lord's brother. Moreover, the writer of the epistle seems to separate himself from the apostles by his words in verses 17, 18: "Remember the words before spoken by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they said to you, At the last time there will be mockers," etc. These words also suggest that Jude was somewhat later in time than the apostles. And this suggests further that the brothers of Christ were not sons of Joseph by an earlier wife, but younger sons of Joseph and Mary. The easiest explanation of the whole case is that the epistle before us claims to have been written, not by the Apostle Jude, but by a brother of James the Just and of Christ.

That, like James, Jude does not call himself here a brother of our Lord, rather supports this claim. A writer who, at a later date, tried to pass off as written by Jude a work of his own or of some contemporary would have been less likely to have been deterred by delicacy from mentioning the relation of Jude to Jesus.

The Epistle of Jude is mentioned in the "Fragment of Muratori," but in somewhat ambiguous language. It is twice quoted at some length by Clement of Alexandria as written

by Jude. Tertullian quotes it as written by Jude the Apostle. Origen quotes it several times; *e. g.*, "On Matthew": "Jude wrote a letter, of few verses, but full of powerful words of heavenly grace." Eusebius places it, with the Epistle of James, among the disputed books. He says, in his "Church History," Book II, xxiii: "Not many of the ancients have mentioned it (the Epistle of James), and not even that called the Epistle of Jude, which is also one of the seven called catholic epistles. Nevertheless, we know that these, with the rest, are publicly used in most of the churches." Jerome writes, in his "Illustrious Men," chapter i: "Jude the brother of James left a small epistle indeed, which belongs to the seven catholic ones. And because in it he takes a testimony from the Book of Enoch, which is apocryphal, it is rejected by most. However, it has already obtained such authority by antiquity and use that it is reckoned among the Sacred Scriptures."

This external attestation is not supported, owing to the silence of the New Testament about the professed writer of this epistle, by any internal evidence. On the other hand, we have proof that the epistle was current in the second century as written by the man whose name it bears, and as one of the Christian Scriptures. And against this evidence we have nothing to set. Therefore, with such confidence as the scantiness of the evidence permits, we may accept it as a genuine work of a brother of Jesus Christ.

In Jude 14, 15, words found in the apocryphal Book of Enoch are quoted as actually spoken by the patriarch. The portion from which they are taken was written probably about 170 B. C. The incident about the Archangel Michael is not found in the Old Testament. But I do not know that these references have any clear bearing on the genuineness of the epistle.

The provincial Council of Laodicea in 363 A. D. accepted as canonical, *i. e.*, belonging to the Christian Scriptures, all the books now included in the New Testament except the Book of Revelation, and no others. All, including this last, and no others, were accepted by the provincial Council of Carthage in 397 A. D.

REVIEW. We have found abundant evidence, external and internal, proving beyond possibility of doubt that the Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians were actually written by the great apostle. This group of epistles thus became to us a sure standard with which to compare others attributed to him. And this comparison, taken in connection with much other evidence, proved decisively the genuineness of all thirteen epistles claiming to be his. We found, or pointed to, internal evidence which, taken in connection with the Epistles of Paul, assured us that the Fourth Gospel affords a trustworthy and most valuable account of the work and teaching of Christ; and that the First Epistle of John is a legitimate exposition of that teaching. This internal evidence, taken together with strong external attestation, gave us reasonable certainty that both Gospel and Epistle were, at least indirectly, from the pen of the Apostle John, and were clothed with his authority. Other accounts of the work and teaching of Christ, which by internal evidence and by comparison one with another, and with the writings of John and Paul, were proved to be trustworthy, we found in the three Synoptic Gospels, and we found good reason to believe that these Gospels were authoritative records emanating from the first or second generations of the followers of Christ. We found, also, abundant proof of the trustworthiness and accuracy of the Book of Acts, and reliable evidence that it came, along with the Third Gospel, from a companion and friend of Paul. Around this well-authenticated group of documents, each of which was accepted with complete confidence by all early Christian writers, we found others with less abundant attestation, yet worthy of confidence, and of great value. One epistle we traced to the pen of James, brother of our Lord, the famous leader of the church at Jerusalem; and in it we found an all-important type of teaching

different from, yet in close harmony with, and supplementing, those of Paul and John. Of the anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews, we found traces at the beginning of the second century : and its evidently early date and intrinsic worth gained for it at once a place in the sacred Canon. The Book of Revelation, we found accepted as written by the Apostle John, not universally but by witnesses reaching back to at least the middle of the second century ; and this early testimony, we were, even in spite of great differences between it and the Fourth Gospel, unable to reject. We found a letter which was confidently accepted by all early Christian writers as from the Apostle Peter ; and, although lack of internal evidence left this external attestation without further support, we found nothing against it. Considerable external evidence supported the claim of the short Epistle of Jude to have been written by a brother of James and of Christ. For the still shorter Second and Third Epistles attributed to John we found evidence, not abundant, but uncontested, and I think sufficient, that they came from the author of the First Epistle. The least attested of the writings of the New Testament, we found to be the Second Epistle, claiming to be written by the Apostle Peter.

In other words, we found in the New Testament a large inner circle of documents proved by decisive evidence to be trustworthy and very early records of the actual life and teaching of Christ, and genuine embodiments of the religious life and thought of his immediate followers ; and around these a few short books, perhaps, taken together, one-sixtieth of the whole collection, of great interest but not supported by decisive evidence.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARE OUR COPIES CORRECT?

WE now ask, To what extent do our English versions of the New Testament reproduce the sense intended by its original writers? This question resolves itself into two : (1) To what extent do the Greek texts used by the translators correspond with the Greek words actually written by the evangelists and apostles? and (2) To what extent do our English versions reproduce the meaning of the Greek text?

To answer the first question is the task of the department of scholarship known as Textual Criticism, or sometimes The Lower Criticism. Its work is to collect all early copies of the New Testament or of parts of it, to decipher and compare them, and thus discover, as nearly as possible, the original text.

The evidence at our disposal consists of three kinds. (1) Early Greek manuscripts ; and these are of two classes, Uncials, written in capital letters, and Cursives, in running hand. Roughly speaking, the uncials are earlier, and the cursives later, than 1000 A. D. Of the Gospels, six uncials contain the whole, four nearly the whole, eleven a great part, and many others smaller portions. For the rest of the New Testament, the number is less ; least of all for the Book of Revelation, namely, three containing the whole and two a great part. The earliest two uncials are from the fourth century, and probably from the former half of it. Of the cursives, including lectionaries or service books, there are, containing the whole or parts of the Gospels, some 2,200, and of the Epistles of Paul probably more than 600. (2) Ancient translations of the New Testament, which bear witness to the Greek text current when they were made. Of these, the most valuable are the Syriac, of which we have four versions and many manuscripts ; three Egyptian versions known as the Coptic, Thebaic, and Basmuric ; and two Latin versions, namely, the Old Latin, of which we have one copy from the fourth and one



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from the fifth century and others later, and the Vulgate, of which we have valuable copies and which may be called the Authorized Version of the Roman Catholic Church. (3) Quotations in the writings of the Fathers. These are very abundant, in works written in the second and following centuries. But these works we possess only in copies made much later. Consequently, this class of evidence, though sometimes very valuable, must be used with great caution. For we cannot always be sure that we know what the Fathers actually wrote.

The testimony of these various witnesses has been carefully weighed and recorded. The earliest Greek copies, and some others, have been reprinted word for word; and some have been photographed page for page. Of a still larger number, we have collations, *i. e.*, published lists of their variations from a commonly adopted standard called the Received Text. We have also critical editions of the Greek Testament, giving not only a revised text, but, under each verse, the variations of the Greek manuscripts and versions and the more important quotations. Of these critical editions, I may mention those of Lachmann, in 1842-50 A. D.; Tischendorf, eighth edition, in 1869-72 A. D.; Tregelles, 1857-70 A. D.; and Westcott & Hort, in 1881 A. D.

What do these various witnesses, thus carefully interrogated, say about the state of the text of the New Testament? They reveal an immense number of variations. In almost every verse they appear. But a large proportion of these variations affect the meaning of the text very slightly or not at all. The number of important variations is comparatively small. On this point I may quote the testimony of Westcott & Hort in their "New Testament in Greek," Volume I, page 561: "If comparative trivialities, such as changes of order, the insertion or omission of the article with proper names, and the like, are set aside, the words in our opinion still subject to doubt can hardly amount to more than a thousandth part of the whole New Testament." In other words, the close agreement of almost innumerable copies proves beyond possibility of doubt that we have the Greek Testament in a form practically the same as that in which it left the hands of its original writers.

All the variations worthy of note are marked in the Revised Version. Where there is strong reason to doubt the correctness of the text used, a marginal note informs us that, *Many ancient authorities insert, or omit, some words given, or put others in their place.* Where the doubt is not great, but seems to the revisers worthy of record, it is indicated by the marginal phrase, *Some ancient authorities or some authorities insert or omit.* Where this last form is used, the doubt is very slight. Indeed, in some cases where the former is used, *e. g.*, Luke xxiv, 6, the doubt is hardly worth mentioning. Important and long variations are introduced with more precise marginal notes in Mark xvi, 9, John vii, 53. Where no marginal note is given, the Greek text adopted by the revisers, which has been published, may be accepted as, within narrow limits, correct.

Our second question is, Do our English versions reproduce fairly the text translated? The variety of translations will afford an answer. We have the Revised Version published in 1881 A. D., the Authorized Version published in 1611 A. D., and the Roman Catholic version published at Rheims in 1582 A. D.; three translations of very different origin, yet in the main they agree. We have in all versions the same portrait of Christ, the same Gospel, and the same expositions, and illustrations, and applications of it. These, therefore, must be due, not to translators, but to the original writers. Compare also the Latin Vulgate, as sanctioned by Popes Sixtus V. and Clement VIII., with Luther's German version. The same result will follow. And the theological differences between Roman Catholics and Protestants are vouchers for the comparative correctness of that which they agree to accept. I do not say that, wherever these witnesses agree, we may rely on their correctness; but that they agree in the main, and in the main may be accepted.

At the same time, we must remember that every translation is imperfect. It is a lens which absorbs and deflects, while it transmits, the light. In every translation something is lost

in accuracy, clearness, and force. And translations sometimes err—not merely in failing to give the writer's full meaning, but by putting other thoughts in place of his. Not a few readers, and even writers, have fallen into errors of doctrine by using the English Authorized Version. Fortunately, this danger has been much lessened by the publication of the Revised Version, which, whatever be its defects, reproduces far more accurately than does any earlier translation the thoughts which the writers of the Bible intended their words to convey.

An effective safeguard against doctrinal error in using the English Bible is to compare constantly one part of it with another. Hold with great caution any doctrine rarely taught. The Spirit of God has made provision for defects of translation by teaching the vital truths so frequently and so variously that there need be no serious mistake. The meaning of one statement is often determined by another given in proof. The line of thought is usually a safe guide to the meaning of sentences and words. Each effort to grasp their meaning and reasoning will bring the student into closer mental fellowship with the Sacred Writers, and thus explain their words. And each spiritual effort to grasp and appropriate the blessings promised, and to carry out in practical life the lessons taught, will open a way to further and greater lessons and to richer blessings. To the devout student, the English Bible will be in very truth the Voice and Word of God.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PLACE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

WE have now learned that all, or nearly all, the books of the New Testament are products of the first and second generations of the followers of Christ. They are also the only literary products of those generations which have come down to us. They are records of the life, and work, and teaching of Christ, expositions of his teaching, and applications of it to the actual life of his early followers. Upon these recorded facts, and especially upon his resurrection, rests the divine authority of his teaching and of his promise of life eternal to all those who put faith in him: for the facts are the proof of his divine mission and unique dignity. Consequently, upon the historic truth of these documents rests the faith and hope of the servants of Christ.

The historic truthfulness of the New Testament must be tested as we should test any other documents of the past; but with greater reverence and care proportionate to the greater interests involved. Its divine authority, resting as it does upon its historic truth, cannot be appealed to in proof of its truth. Else we argue in a circle. And it need not be thus appealed to, for apart from such divine authority, the documents of the New Testament contain in themselves complete proof of their substantial historic truthfulness. Its theological teaching and arguments must be carefully investigated according to the laws of human thought and language.

The letters which we have traced to the pen of Paul reveal to us the lovely homage with which he bowed before Christ as infinitely greater and nearer to God than the greatest and best of men, a homage to Christ involving a new conception of God; and his firm belief that Christ had, in bodily form, been raised from the dead. They embody, also, his conception of the Gospel of Christ. They thus compel us to believe, either that Christ actually is what Paul confidently believed him to be, or that the greatest of his apostles, the founder of the Christianity of Europe, was in deep error touching his Master and the Gospel he preached, and touching the nature of God. The other books of the New Testament, from other writers, and

some of them manifestly independent of the teaching of Paul, prove that his faith was shared by all the Christian writers of the first half-century after the death of Christ, whose works have come down to us. They thus prove that Paul's conception of Christ and the Gospel was not peculiar to himself. They compel us to believe, either that Christ is, in a unique sense, the Son of God, or that all the men who gained for him the homage of mankind, and through whose agency he became the Savior of the world, were in deep error touching both Christ and God. The impossibility of this last suggestion is complete proof that the picture of Christ and the account of the Gospel given in the New Testament are historically and theologically true.

The place of the New Testament in the Christian life is now evident. It contains the documentary evidence for the unique claims of Christ and for the Gospel he preached. It is not itself a new revelation, for it contains nothing which was not known to men before a line of the New Testament was written, but it is a record and exposition of the supreme revelation given to men in Christ, and of certain facts needful to prove its divine origin and authority — a record sufficiently extensive and accurate for all the spiritual purposes for which the revelation was given.

The above argument, we may press one step farther. Had not the books of the New Testament been written, or had they not survived, we should not have had the solid historical foundation on which our faith and hope now rest securely. Without this confident faith and hope, there could be now no robust and strong Christian life. Christianity would almost certainly have been lost in the chaos of strange beliefs which arose in the second century. From that confusion the Christian faith was saved, as we read in the works of Irenæus and Tertullian, by appeal to the sacred documents. Without these, it would have perished. If so, the great purpose for which God sent his Son into the world, and for which Christ died, would not have been attained; and the Incarnation of the Son of God would have been a failure. Such failure is inconceivable. We, therefore, infer with certainty that the New Testament was itself an essential part of God's eternal purpose of salvation; that he who before the world was, resolved to give his Son to die, in order to save man and to build up the eternal kingdom of God, purposed everything needful for that end, and, therefore, resolved to secure for man a correct and sufficient record of the work and teaching of Christ.

A similar line of argument would prove that the Old Testament contains documentary evidence for earlier divine revelations preparatory to the great revelation in Christ, and is a divinely given record of these earlier and preparatory manifestations. In other words, the whole Bible occupies a unique place in human literature as a divinely given record of special and historical revelations from God to man.

Although, as we have seen, they were written to fulfill a divine purpose, the books of the New Testament were written by human hands; and these were guided, as we learn from Luke i, 1-4 and elsewhere, by ordinary motives of good men. These men and these motives were thus the means by which God accomplished this part of his great purpose. Now, the Holy Spirit is that Divine Person who comes into immediate contact with the mind and thought of men, and who works out in them the purposes of God. We, therefore, infer that through his agency, moving them to write, and guiding and guarding them in writing, God secured for men the needful record of the Gospel of Christ. This inference finds remarkable confirmation in Acts xxviii, 25, Hebrews x, 15, where the Old Testament is quoted as a testimony of the Holy Spirit. Since, as we have seen, the Bible occupies a unique place in human literature and in the purpose of God, this influence of the Holy Spirit must also have been unique. We speak of it as the Inspiration of Holy Scripture.

The unique honor paid to the New Testament by the early Christians is abundantly attested by quotations in the works of Irenæus and of all later Christian writers. Among the other accounts of Christ referred to in Luke i, 1, the four Gospels stood alone as having special

authority. The same authority is given to the Book of Acts and the Epistles of Paul. Here and there one or two other works are quoted in a similar manner. But these never gained wide acceptance ; and the books now recognized alone remain as being, in a special and official sense, the Christian Scriptures.

We may sum up the results of this inquiry by speaking of the New Testament, not as the Pearl of Great Price—this title must be reserved for the personal and incarnate Word—but as the casket containing that pearl and conveying it to us. Without the casket, the pearl would not have reached us. But he who gave the pearl gave also the casket. In itself it is a thing of divine beauty. But its glory is as nothing compared with the treasure within. The casket is locked ; and none can open it except its divine Author. But wherever the casket is, there is the key. To all sincere inquirers, the Interpreter will open the hidden treasures, and thus make them rich indeed. The real worth of the New Testament is that in its pages we see the face of Christ, and hear his voice, and experience his power, and thus enter into abiding fellowship with him.

In the foregoing outline I have written without reserve, as a student to fellow-students, a worshiper to fellow-worshippers. We have nothing to hide. The more fully the facts of the case are known, the more firmly will our feet stand on the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture.

Jos. Agar Beeth



THE WISE MEN'S OFFERING.



Yours truly
Caspar René Gregory.

THE MANUSCRIPTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER I.

THE MATERIALS.

IF a clergyman nowadays wishes to send a letter to a church in which he formerly preached, he takes up a sheet of paper, opens his inkstand, and dips the goose quill, or steel pen, or the gold pen into the ink—or perhaps he uses a fountain pen. If we could go back 1,840 years and stand at the side of the Apostle Paul, we should not find a metal pen in his hand, or in the hand of his secretary, and the ink would not be precisely like our ink, and the paper would be quite different from ours. Instead of one of our pens we should see a reed pen in his hand. Go to the river in the autumn, cut a ripe stalk of reed-grass, let it dry, and then sharpen a piece of the round stem into a pen-point, with a slit in it. You will find that you can write beautifully with it, if you trim it off neatly. Some people draw pictures with reed pens. Now, the reeds are a little different in different countries, but to all intents and purposes it was with just such a reed pen that the letters of Paul were written. His ink was probably a homemade ink—that is to say, an ink that he mixed for himself by adding water to soot that had been rubbed fine in gum arabic. As for the paper, that was quite another thing. It was, it is true, smooth enough to write upon, and light colored so as to show the black ink clearly, but still it was not our paper. They called it “papyrus” (the same word that we now write “paper”), because it was made out of the papyrus plant. Now, this papyrus was of all kinds and sizes, just as our paper is. There were coarse kinds for handbills, and fine kinds for letters, and intermediate kinds for all sorts of books, and accounts, and notices. Pretty and smooth as this papyrus was, it had one bad quality: it cracked easily. An old letter, as we know, sometimes cracks apart in the folds even when the paper is fairly good, but a papyrus letter could not be folded and unfolded or rolled up and unrolled often without cracking all over. That is one thing that prevented the original letters of Paul from lasting very long. The Thessalonians, or Corinthians, or Galatians received his letters and read them and lent them, perhaps, to a neighboring church and the papyrus soon began to fall apart, so that the churches must have very soon copied the letters, and nobody is likely to have troubled himself about the worn-out originals.

For the longer Epistles and for the Gospels, of course, a number of sheets of papyrus were necessary. At that day they did not write letters on a number of separate sheets as we do, nor did they make books in leaves. They pasted the sheets together on the right and left edges, so as to make what we might call a broad ribbon, and this was rolled up. Such rolls were sometimes many feet long. The writing was in narrow columns so that in reading it was not necessary to have much of the roll open. A reader rolled one side together—the side he had read—column for column, and rolled the other side open so that he could read the next column. The back of the roll was blank, for it would have cracked and torn apart very quickly if they had tried to roll it in two different ways. In the narrow columns they tried to save space and they even went so far as not to leave space between the words at all. One letter followed upon

another letter and one word upon another, and it was only now and then that a clear sign showed the end of a sentence. It was not easy to read a manuscript of this kind quickly, but at that time people were not in a hurry, and they were not distressed if a good thing had to be brought out slowly.

When the Church began to understand that the end of the world would not come immediately, and to see that the writings of the first teachers would have a lasting value, and would be read and reread in the churches for an indefinite time, the people who copied the New Testament writings gave up the papyrus, so far as their means allowed, and copied these valuable books on parchment. Parchment is a skin—usually sheepskin—well cured and rubbed smooth, and often whitened with chalk. This parchment was far better than papyrus. If a man has some especially valuable writing in our day, like a college diploma, or a deed, or a will, he does not have it put on paper, but on parchment, so that it may last a long, long while. It was just the same with these priceless books of the Christian Church. As soon as they saw that the books must needs endure, they copied them on parchment, if they could get it. During the second century, between the years 100 and 200 A. D., the Four Gospels were brought together into one collection, Paul's Epistles were gathered together, and the Catholic Epistles. At the close of that century, accordingly as large or small rolls happened to be chosen, the New Testament, as we call it, could be written off in four, or ten, or a still larger number of rolls. If there were only four rolls, one for the Gospels, one for the Acts and the Catholic Epistles, one for Paul's Epistles, and one for the Revelation, then the Gospel roll and the Pauline roll would be very large. It is likely, therefore, that the separate Gospels were usually on separate rolls, that the Catholic Epistles had a roll to themselves, and that Paul's Epistles were divided into several rolls.

Possibly somewhere about the year 300 A. D., bookmakers found out that instead of the long, clumsy rolls that must be rolled open and shut to find particular passages, it would be possible to bring the text of long writings into separate leaves bound together like our books. With papyrus that did not work very well, because it cracked apart so easily. So far as I am aware, but a single manuscript on papyrus is known that was made in book form. It is a few leaves of Zechariah and Malachi. The owner is willing to sell it, but he is right in asking a large price for it. I wish somebody would buy it for America. Of course, there were many leaf-books made out of papyrus, but they did not last long as a rule. Parchment, on the contrary, was just the stuff for a leaf-book. It was smooth, and it was stiff enough, and it was so tough that generations could turn the leaves of the book without cracking it apart. In the old rolls everybody was used to writing and reading the narrow columns that were so convenient because the reader could hold in each hand a rolled-up part of the book and still read the column in between; it would have been tiring to hold the hands far apart. When they began to make leaf-books they do not seem to have thought at first that it would be as well to make broader columns of writing. In consequence of this the two oldest large manuscripts of the New Testament in Greek, the "*Codex Sinaiticus*" and the "*Codex Vaticanus*," have very narrow columns, just as if they were on rolls and not on leaf-books.

Let us have a look at the "*Codex Sinaiticus*." It is one of the most remarkable manuscripts known. It contains a large part of the Old Testament and the whole of the New Testament. Tischendorf found a few leaves of it in the year 1844 in the convent of St. Catharine on Mount Sinai. He tried for years to find the rest, but in vain. The leaves that he saw belonged to the Old Testament. When, finally, in the year 1859, he discovered the remaining leaves he was delighted to see that they contained also the whole of the New Testament, as well as other valuable matter. He went to Cairo and begged the monastery there to send to Sinai for the manuscript, and it was at once brought by a swift camel rider to Cairo. Here Tischendorf received sixteen leaves at a time, copied them, with the help of two Germans, and gave

them back so as to get the next sixteen leaves. After several months they gave him the whole manuscript so that he might publish it and then hand over the original to the emperor of Russia, all of which Tischendorf did. It is now in the imperial library at St. Petersburg. If we open the "*Codex Sinaiticus*," we find on each page four of those narrow columns, so that the two pages with their eight columns are like a good long piece from one of the old rolls. The "*Codex Vaticanus*" is much like the "*Codex Sinaiticus*." It has been in the Vatican library at Rome for centuries, but it is only within the last thirty years that it has been carefully studied. It has three columns on each page, and six on the two pages, when you open the book. This codex contains much of the New Testament, but not all. These two manuscripts—the Sinaitic and the Vatican—are by far the most important as well as the oldest of our large copies of the New Testament. They seem to have been written in the fourth century. We find in the writings of Eusebius an account of certain manuscripts that he prepared in 331 A. D., and it seems possible that these two manuscripts belonged to this very collection. The way of it was this. The great Constantine, the first Roman emperor who came to the conclusion that it would pay to favor the Christians, commanded Eusebius to cause fifty splendid Bible manuscripts to be made so that he, the emperor, could give them to the churches. Eusebius did as he was told and he says, apparently, that the manuscripts were written in three and four columns. Now, of course, other manuscripts were written in three and four columns, and yet, when these two large and fine copies seem to be from that time, and when we reflect that not very many people could pay for the good and big parchment leaves, and for the careful writing, it is not at all improbable that, as Tischendorf thought, these two really are from among those fifty manuscripts. The "*Sinaiticus*" and the "*Vaticanus*" were written only about 300 years after the time of Christ and they are now 1,500 years old. Verily, they have a chance to tell us a great deal about the words that are in the New Testament. The manuscripts from which they were copied may possibly have been written less than 100 years after the crucifixion. If we suppose that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans in the spring of the year 59 A. D., the original roll of papyrus may have lasted twenty, or forty, or sixty years, according to the way in which it was used more or less carefully by the elders of the church at Rome. If it lasted sixty years, the manuscript from which Eusebius's scribes copied some of the fifty Bibles might have been copied directly from it or have been compared with it. At any rate, if the "*Sinaiticus*" and "*Vaticanus*" were chiefly copied from rolls of the second century, it is quite plain that there need not have been many steps between them and the original books, so that they are very valuable for us, while the "*Codex Bezae*," a Greek-Latin manuscript now at Cambridge, England, in the university library, and the "*Codex Claromontanus*," a Greek-Latin manuscript now in the national library at Paris, were both written in the sixth century.

CHAPTER II.

THE LETTERS.

WE have already spoken of the two great Greek manuscripts, the Sinaitic and the Vatican, and we have also referred to the "*Codex Beza*" and the "*Codex Claromontanus*." These four belong to the older and more weighty class of manuscripts—to the Uncials as they are called. The name Uncial means that they are written in Uncial or, as we should say to-day, in capital letters. Up to about the year 1000 A. D. the Christians usually had their Biblical manuscripts, as great treasures, written in these capital letters, and, as said above, the words, as a rule, were not separated from each other. In the earlier books the letters are all of one size, but in the later ones there are larger letters for paragraphs and chapters. If we count all the known fragments of such New Testament manuscripts, we have to-day over a hundred. They are by no means alike in appearance. Some, like the "*Sinaiticus*" and "*Vaticanus*," have the most delicate little letters, closely packed together in their columns. Others have huge letters that seem to spread themselves out like opening flowers. Some have letters with great heavy strokes, and the letters stand crooked, perhaps leaning forward or to the right, or perhaps leaning toward the left, according as the fashion at that day or in that country called for the slope of the letters. Some of them are on parchment that has been dyed a deep dark purple, and they have silver ink instead of black ink, which would not show on the dark purple. In these purple and silver manuscripts, the names of God and of Jesus are written in letters of gold. Think how beautiful they must have been when they were new! The people who ordered such manuscripts as these were willing to pay a great deal for the work. Such luxurious books were also splendidly bound. Very few of the manuscripts that we now possess are still in their old bindings, for they have almost all literally, or figuratively, gone through the wars. But well-to-do Christians, and rich churches, and monasteries bound their Biblical volumes gorgeously. The heavy oaken boards of the sides were covered with silk or velvet and then silver corners were put on them. Sometimes, indeed, the boards were completely covered with silver. And then on the corner pieces and in the middle precious stones were set. Very often a large solid silver crucifix was put in the middle. In every way they tried to show how much they valued the Holy Scriptures. It is true that the books nowadays are usually bereft of their ornaments, yet if they have not been rebound in Western Europe, we still often see remnants of the former elegance, patches of silk or satin, the marks where the metal corners were, and the holes that once contained the precious stones. Even when the binding has been torn off, or has been plundered of its valuables, the last fly leaf sometimes still gives the name of the man who bound the volume and the name of the man who paid for the binding, showing how much stress was laid upon it. A few of the old Uncial manuscripts are, however, very hard to read. They are what are called "palimpsests." After they had been used for years and the writing had become very pale, a man who wished for a new book used the leaves—the parchment leaves—of the old book precisely as if they had been clean, fresh parchment, and calmly wrote the new writing over the old writing as if it had never existed. In one way this was a great pity, because we care more for the older and less for the younger books. But then we must remember that if the old parchment had not been used in this way, it would probably have been thrown away outright and then we should never have seen it, never have been able to read it at all. But it is very hard work to study out the old letters

so faded and dim underneath the bold letters of the new writing. I have spent hours on a very small piece of a palimpsest seeking for sure traces of the ancient words that are worth so much to us. One of the most famous palimpsests is in the national library at Paris. It is called the "*Codex Ephraemi*," because the upper new writing contains a Greek translation of the words of Ephraem the Syrian. There are three or four manuscripts written in short lines according to the sense, so that the lines make, in a certain measure, a punctuation, but that wasted entirely too much room and this method never came into general use.

By far the larger number of the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament are not written in Uncial, or capital letters, but in small letters as we should say. After the tenth century—after the year 1000—the capital letters were used for the beginning of books or of chapters, but the body of the manuscript was written in a running hand, many of the letters being joined to each other. Certain large volumes of Scripture lessons were still usually copied in capital letters, but that was in order to make them more stately, and, perhaps, to make it easier to see the writing by candlelight in the church services. Many a New Testament manuscript has spots of wax on it from the candles in church. That, of course, does not mean that the great altar candles dropped wax on the pages—that was impossible. But in the dark the readers often took little short candles and held them close to the book as they read line by line, and thus wax often dropped on the writing. I have seen the reader in a Greek church do this, and, much as I felt like blaming him for his carelessness, I could not but be glad to have so clear a display of the way in which wax-drops came to fall on the manuscripts. But we must go back to the manuscripts written in a running hand. I said that they were the larger number, and you will agree with me when I say that over against the hundred and more Uncial manuscripts, there exist at least 2,000 of the Minuscules, as they are called, or small-letter manuscripts, and probably when all the libraries of the East are catalogued we shall have 5,000 or 6,000. Of those that have been carefully, or, perhaps, only hastily examined, there are, I suppose, at least 1,300 that contain the Gospels, several hundred contain the Acts and Catholic Epistles, and several hundred the Pauline Epistles. It was stated above that the Uncial manuscripts were the most valuable. Nevertheless, the Minuscules are not worthless. They will tell us, when they are carefully examined, a great deal about the history of the text. They will show how each country and each century copied the New Testament, and will thus help us to understand all the steps that lead back to the original writing. There is still a great deal of work to be done here, for it will take a great many hands to compare the text and to examine carefully the character of these thousands of volumes. These Minuscules are as different from each other as the Uncials are. Some of them are in a very small, fine hand, and others are in bold round letters. In some the ink is very pale, in others a deep brown, and in still others a sooty black. The capital letters at the beginning of books and of chapters are usually in red ink. Not seldom, however, they are in several colors, or even beautifully painted with all manner of figures. For example, a large B is made by painting a man and a big snake touching his feet with the tail, then bowed out in a curve and coming back to go round his waist, and finally touching the man's head with his open jaws. An A is made by two fish leaning against each other and crossed by a little fish. An O is made by a single big fish hollowed out, or by two fish curved to come together with their heads and tails. I have seen an A made by a picture of a man carrying a bucket in his right hand stretched somewhat toward the back, and his right foot touching the bucket made a rather slanting crossbar. In one manuscript an E is made by a combination of two birds and two hares, all resting on a beast's head.

CHAPTER III.

PICTURES.

IT is also common to find in these volumes pictures — large full-page pictures — of the four evangelists. Each one sits and writes away at the beginning of his Gospel. Such pictures are sometimes profusely decorated with heavy gold leaf wherever the painter could find an excuse for putting it on. If a writing desk or a closet be in the picture, it is possible that a door ajar below shows a big bottle of ink and a pile of parchment ready to be written upon. On top of the desk lie the scribe's tools — a couple of extra reed pens, a knife to sharpen the pens, an inkstand with black and one with red ink, a pair of compasses to measure off the lines, a leaden wheel to dent the lines into the parchment without cutting it, a brush or two for painting the pictures, and a bit of pumice stone to rub off a false letter or to polish a rough place in the parchment. In one manuscript I saw a basket with *rolls* of parchment, and I think that picture must have been copied from some old picture that had been painted when rolls were used instead of leaf-books. If I am not very much mistaken, one of the most interesting of all the pictures in these manuscripts is one that is frequently found at the beginning of the Gospel of John. According to tradition, the Apostle John was very old when he wrote his Gospel, and it is said that he did not use the pen himself but dictated the words to a pupil of his, just as Paul dictated many a letter to his young friends who were with him. Now, the name of the pupil to whom John dictated his Gospel was Prochorus. The picture gives the whole story. For God's spirit or power inspired the apostle and this is portrayed by a cloud in the upper right-hand corner of the picture from which a hand comes forth pointing toward John, and the hand may bear the inscription: "The Hand of the Lord." If there be no hand, there will at least be rays of light gleaming forth from the cloud as if God's spirit became visible in the overshadowing light. This is the heavenly part of the picture. Then we see the apostle standing in the attitude of attentive listening. One hand he stretches upward toward the heavenly apparition as a sign that he thus receives from heaven the message. With the other hand he points downward toward his pupil. And, finally, his pupil sits in the corner of the picture below and writes what the apostle dictates. By the pupil's head stands the inscription, Prochorus. Is that not a pretty way to tell all about it?

Another manuscript — in the national library at Paris — has a very ingenious arrangement of colors. The words that read straight along in the text, that tell how Jesus went here and there, who came to him, and the like — all these words are in bright vermilion. Of course, that is then the larger part of the text in many places. If, however, an angel, or Mary the mother of Jesus, or one of the disciples, says anything, that is put in a clear blue color. The words of Jesus are in a rich crimson. And finally, the words of the Pharisees, and of the Devil, and of all enemies of Jesus are in deep black. The moment you open a page you see the character of the words on it.

The men who copied the manuscripts in olden times were not always as careful as they should have been to copy correctly. Who knows whether you and I would have done better if we had been in their place? But some of them knew how easy it was to make mistakes — or, we might say, how impossible it was, and is, not to make mistakes — and they always went over their work again and compared it with the manuscript from which they had just copied it. It may be that they did this as they went through the book again to put in the capital letters in red ink, and I have thus sometimes seen the corrections made in red. If they had written

a letter or a word too much, they put little dots above, below or around it. If a word were wrong, they either scraped it off and wrote the right one in its place, or they put dots over it and then wrote the right word in the margin. Not infrequently the scribes took some other old manuscript—not the one from which they had copied, but some other good one. If they found a different word in this, they sometimes wrote it in as above; sometimes, however, if they were not perfectly certain which word was right, they placed a sign of some kind over the word in the text and then wrote the other word in the margin with this same sign. In such a case a following scribe who copied from this book might easily write both words in the text—and we do find just such cases—thinking that it had been left out of the text by mistake. In some places several words were put in thus alongside of, and not instead of, the words they were intended to replace.

I have said that the scribes who were careful compared their copies with good manuscripts. Now, we know that there was once a very fine library at Cæsarea in Palestine brought together, or at any rate specially cared for, by Pamphilus at the end of the third century. A few volumes still contain statements that they, or volumes from which they were copied, had been carefully compared with the best manuscripts in the library of Pamphilus at Cæsarea. It is further of interest that Eusebius, to whom Constantine sent the order for those fifty fine Bibles, was bishop of Cæsarea and that he was so warm and devoted a friend of Pamphilus that he was and is still named Pamphilus's Eusebius. In other copies we find a note telling of their text being compared with that of the best manuscripts that were kept on the holy mountain at Jerusalem. More than one Christian scholar gave himself up to doing all that he could to make the manuscripts of the New Testament books exact and in every way well fitted for use. One named Euthalius attended particularly to the letters of Paul and gathered all the lists of chapters and so forth that he could find, or made new lists for himself, so that his copies contained as an introduction a long description of Paul's life, and journeys, and martyrdom, then a special description of his letters, and besides that each letter was provided with a good preface, and with a full list of chapters that gave even the headings of divisions within the chapters—if the chapters happened to be very long—and a full list of all quotations that occurred in the letter. These quotations, mostly from the Old Testament, were numbered as carefully as the chapters were. And to make all his work as complete and as correct as possible Euthalius even counted all the syllables of all these lists and put at the end of each the number of syllables, or rather of lines of a given length, so that any reader could count for himself and see if everything was there. I have just spoken of chapters that were used in the fourth century, for Euthalius flourished, perhaps, at the end of the fourth or in the middle of the fifth century, and the chapters were in use before his time, but you must not think that these were our chapters.

CHAPTER IV.

CHAPTERS.

OUR chapters, in fact, never appear in Greek manuscripts properly so-called. There are only a few Greek manuscripts, of a late date and written in Western Europe, in which the scribe put down the division that we have — a division that was made in the Latin Bible and then transferred to our Bibles. If we take up the Gospels we find that in Greek manuscripts Matthew had 68 chapters, Mark 48, Luke 83, and John 18, so that they are very different from our 28 chapters for Matthew, 16 for Mark, 24 for Luke, and 21 for John. Besides these large chapters the Greek had little chapters that were ingeniously made to contain the separate pieces of the text, divided according to the relation of the Gospels to each other. I must explain this more clearly. The readers wished to know how far what was in one of the Gospels was to be found in another, or in others of the four, and they wished to know where to find it. For this purpose each Gospel was cut up by Eusebius into small chapters, of which Matthew had 355, Mark 233, Luke 342, and John 232, and a chapter always stops the moment the words are no longer to be found in precisely the same Gospels. Take, for example, the end of the tenth chapter of Matthew: verses 34 to 36 are chapter 95, found in both Matthew and Luke, in Luke as chapter 160; verses 37 and 38 are also found only in Matthew and Luke, but they are made a separate chapter — 96 — because they stand in another place in Luke, namely, as chapters 182 and 184; verse 39 is chapter 97, which is found in Matthew, Luke (chapter 211), and John (chapter 105); verse 40 is chapter 98 which is in all four Gospels — Matthew, Mark (chapter 96), Luke (chapter 116), and John (chapters 40, 111, 120, 129, 131, 144), showing that John had used the material in his own way; verse 41 is only in Matthew and is numbered chapter 99; and finally, verse 42 (or chapter 100) is found only in Matthew and in Mark (chapter 98). In order to be able to tell at once where the chapter stood in the other Gospels, Eusebius made ten lists — canons as he called them — and put in the first list the chapters of Matthew that were found in *all* the other Gospels, with the corresponding chapters on the same line, and then under each of these chapters in the margin he put a red *a* which stood for “one.” Hence at Matthew 40, mentioned above, you would have found on the margin 98, which means that 98 is in list one, and on turning to list one you would have found 98 in the Matthew column and opposite to it 96 in the Mark column, 116 in the Luke column, and those six (given above), in the John column. The second list was for the chapters that are found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke; the third for those in Matthew, Luke, and John; the fourth Matthew, Mark, and John; the fifth Matthew and Luke; the sixth Matthew and Mark; the seventh Matthew and John (only seven chapters); the eighth Luke and Mark; the ninth Luke and John, and the tenth the chapters that are only contained in a single Gospel. It is a pity that our Bibles to-day are not arranged with such divisions on the margin.

Our verses are much more modern even than the chapters. They were made, or divided off, by Robert Stephanus or Robert Étienne, a great French printer. He did the work on a horseback journey from Paris to Lyons, probably not while riding but while resting. The first edition in which the verses appeared was his edition of the year 1551, a lovely little edition in two volumes; it is very rare, indeed. The Book of Acts, and the Catholic Epistles, and Paul’s Epistles had also their own chapters in the Greek New Testament, but there is nothing peculiarly interesting about the division. But the Revelation had an interesting reason for its division which was the work of Andrew, a bishop at Cæsarea in Cappadocia, Asia Minor—not

Eusebius's Cæsarea. In the first place, he divided the whole of Revelation into twenty-four books, or words, or discourses, according to the number of the elders,¹ and then, as if he regarded each discourse as an elder, he said each one of the twenty-four had a body, a soul, and a spirit, and, therefore, he divided each discourse into three chapters, making 72 chapters in all. Besides the chapter division the manuscripts frequently give the division for the church-lessons; for example, 116 in Matthew, 71 in Mark, 114 in Luke, and 67 in John. That leads us, however, to a somewhat different class of books—to the lectionaries.

It was above observed in passing that the lesson-books, or lectionaries, for reading in the churches, were written in capital letters even after the other Biblical manuscripts came to be written in small letters. That agreed with the large size of these books and with the heavy ornamentation inside and outside. Each lesson usually had a very beautiful great letter at the beginning, and these letters were sometimes exquisitely painted in miniature in gold and colors. One book held the Gospel lessons and one the lessons from the Acts and the epistles. The former was called, and in the Greek church to-day still is called, simply "The Gospel," and the latter "The Apostle." Let us open "The Gospel." We find that it begins with the first chapter and the first verse of the Gospel of John, as appointed for Easter Sunday. "For the Holy and Great Sunday of the Passover," is the heading, and then follows "According to John": "In the beginning was the word," and so on up to the end of the seventeenth verse. After this come the Gospel lessons from Easter to Whitsuntide, from the Passover to Pentecost, almost all of which are taken from the Gospel of John. In "The Apostle" the Book of Acts was read from Easter to Whitsuntide, and we know from Chrysostomus that that was a custom at Constantinople in his day. On Whitmonday the Gospel lessons from Matthew begin and last until the sixteenth or seventeenth Sunday thereafter, although the week-day lessons for the latter part, say, from the eleventh week, are drawn from Mark. On the Greek New Year at September the lessons were taken from Luke, and these continued up to just before the beginning of Lent, with week-day lessons again from Mark in the last few weeks. In Lent there are lessons from Mark, and special lessons for all the chief days, closing with the lessons for Holy Week, including twelve Gospels of the Passion and four Gospels for the third, fifth, sixth, and ninth hours on Good Friday. That is the first part of "The Gospel," the part for the movable feasts. The second part is for the fixed days and saints' days and begins at "New Year" or September first with the lesson for the day of Simon Stylites. It then goes through the months with Christmas and Epiphany as great days, and ends on August 31st.

For "The Apostle" it is only necessary to add that the Epistle to the Romans began after Pentecost and that then the various epistles were brought forward as need might be, without special subdivisions, until Lent. It is easy to see that such a series of lessons scarcely omits anything in the New Testament, with the exception of the Book of Revelation, which as we have said, does not appear at all. These lectionaries then must be consulted so that we may learn what text the church used in its services. It will, I think, sometimes appear that they offer a very old text, just as the Psalter in the English Prayer Book gives us a translation that has long passed away in the Bibles generally used. By the way, the earliest printed Greek lectionaries are, for comparison with the text, quite as good as some of the manuscripts, for they were taken from manuscripts and had nothing to do with the editions that were printed at Alcalá, and Basel, and Paris. Furthermore, it really should be emphasized that for the majority of the members of the Greek Church these lesson-books were the New Testament, since they were too poor to have Bibles of their own, or too ignorant to read them, and could only take that which was offered to them in the services of the church. But even thus they often knew enough of the Bible to put to shame people in our day who have beautiful Bibles but do not read them, and who pay little heed to what they hear in church.

¹ Revelation iv, 4.

CHAPTER V.

TRANSLATIONS.

WHEN we are trying to find out what the original words in the Greek New Testament are, we dare not neglect the translations into other languages, for as we have already said, many of these translations or versions are very ancient, and then, too, they were made in different countries and, therefore, help us to reach a widely spread tradition. Palestine is in Syria, and the language that Jesus and his disciples spoke was a later kind of Hebrew, the Aramaic language, which is also very closely related to Syriac or is, if you like, a kind of Syriac. The earliest Christians were, then, in general terms Syrian Jews, and we may be sure that there were not a few of them in Antioch and perhaps even in Edessa and Nisibis in Eastern Syria. These Syrian Christians undoubtedly needed a Syriac New Testament very soon—as soon as they learned that there was a Greek New Testament. I think it most likely that they translated the books into Syriac before the end of the second century, and I regard it as possible that many of the books were translated before the end of the first century. We may be sure that the Syriac text had a special charm for them in the thought that it was almost precisely the language that Jesus had used as he went about from Galilee to Jerusalem, and back again, and to Perea, and to the neighborhood of Tyre. In the place where our Bibles have an Aramaic expression, like “Rabbi,” “Talitha Cumi,” the Syriac translation did not add, as the Greek does, and as our Bibles do, a translation of these words, for they were Syriac already and every reader understood them. This very nearness of the language to the language used by Jesus, and the fact that thus the Syriac translation stood so close to the cradle of Christianity and to the traditions cherished in the circles that centered around the original disciples, the twelve, undoubtedly did much to further that correcting and modifying work upon the text which we have found to be peculiar to the time of the earliest tradition by word of mouth. No one will then be surprised to hear that the text which we found in the “*Codex Bezae*” and in the “*Codex Claromontanus*” is much like the text found in some manuscripts of the Syriac translation. I suppose that these manuscripts represent one of the oldest forms of the Syriac text.

It is, in this connection, of weight to observe that at the beginning of the Christian era the intercourse between Italy and Syria, between Rome and Antioch, was very frequent indeed. Rome was the first capital of the Roman empire, but Antioch was the second, the eastern capital. Furthermore, we must remember that Antioch was a city of great culture, and, finally, that it was a central point for Christianity and Christian missions. There the name “Christian” was first given. Thence Barnabas and Paul, and Paul again and again, set out for their preaching journeys, and thither they returned, even though they touched the mother city Jerusalem, on the way. Add these three things together—Roman sub-capital, high culture, Christian central city—and you will see how of necessity it must follow, and actually did come to pass, that Antioch and then, with her, her sister Syrian capital, Edessa, became the seat of great Christian schools. These schools paid, then, at least at a later day, much attention to the text of the Bible, and it is not yet possible for us to say just how early they began these special studies. The thought is worth considering that the condition of their New Testament text in the second century, as compared with some manuscripts which they knew must be good, led to their careful and painfully exact treatment of the text, both of this and of the Old Testament. We may also remark that their work on the text was, so far as we can judge, much like the

Masoretic work upon the Hebrew Scriptures, and that also fits in well with their Semitic relations to Judaism and to early Christianity. As a result of this we shall find that the Syrian Church, with its central Syro-Greek city Antioch, took an important part in the history of the Greek text. They revised the Syriac text itself, but they appear to have been so judicious as first to revise the Greek text. If they knew the Greek text to be uncertain or wrong, their first duty was to make it right and then to translate as well as they could. It was in a measure the same, for example, when the English and American committees, who issued the revised English Version of the Bible in 1881, found that they must very often go back and correct, or determine surely, the Greek text before they could say what the proper English translation should be. Such a revision of the Greek and then of the Syrian text was probably made by the scholars of Antioch about the middle of the second century. At the beginning of the sixth century, a later revision of the Syrian text was made, and this was again revised at the beginning of the seventh century, but the result of these revisions did not change the main Syrian text, for the revised manuscripts were copied by themselves and the old ones by themselves. Before we leave the Syriac translation we must call attention to one interesting fact. It is well known, in the history of the collection of the books of the New Testament, that the Old Syriac manuscripts did not contain the Second Epistle of Peter, the Second and Third Epistles of John, the Epistle of Jude, or the Revelation. But we must go farther and observe that they also omit Luke xxii, 17, 8; John viii, 1-11, and I. John v, 7, 8. We see by these things that the Syriac translation goes back to an old and, to a certain extent, independent tradition. The last great discovery in this line was the Old Syriac manuscript of the Gospels which Mrs. Agnes Smith Lewis and her sister, Mrs. Gibson, found at Mount Sinai, and have just published, after the most careful research into all the questions connected with the text contained in it. This book sheds great light upon the condition of the text of the New Testament in early times, and we shall, without doubt, learn more and more from it the longer we compare it with the other witnesses for the original form of the books. We hope that this will not be the last discovery made by these learned women, who are so unusually endowed by nature, education, and fortune for investigations in the recluse libraries of the Eastern churches and for fructifying the results of these investigations.

If Syria contained the cradle of the Christian Church, Egypt was connected by history, by tradition, and by the Flight into Egypt, with the Old Testament basis and with the beginnings of Christianity. Judaism was strongly represented, not only in the trade but also in the philosophy and literature, of the Nile country. The Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, here first saw the light. It was, then, only what might have been expected, when the new religious start of Jewish origin began to throw out vigorous shoots in Egypt. Whether Mark worked there or not, cannot now be determined, but the Gospel flourished, whoever was the preacher. The young language of the Copts, freeing itself from the trammels of the old hieroglyphics and appropriating the Greek letters, seems to have been used at a very early date — perhaps even before the end of the second century — in a translation of the New Testament. Since the language itself fell into dialects, we have various forms of the Coptic New Testament. The most important forms are the Sahidic and the Bashmuric. These translations follow, as would be supposed in advance, closely the Greek text. In many instances they put Greek words in among the Coptic words, either because the translator could find no Coptic word to express the thought, or because he and his fellow-countrymen understood the particular Greek word perfectly well and liked to hear it. It cannot be too strongly impressed upon the mind of those who study history, that the Greek language was in the early centuries of Christianity the language of the world. And it must be added that the Greek language is not dead, that it never has ceased to be spoken, and that it is to-day the chief language of general intercourse on a great part of the shores of the Mediterranean. Many a Greek word was then

known—was perfectly familiar to the Egyptians. Indeed, we might have said the same in speaking of the Syriac translation. In the Semitic languages the words are usually short. If in a Syriac book one sees a long word, the safest thing is to read it as a Greek word, and one is seldom disappointed. But to return to the Coptic versions: These translations must have been made from old and good manuscripts and they are among the most valuable witnesses to the ancient text of the New Testament. Within the last few years much has been done towards preparing a good edition of the Coptic New Testament, and Rev. George Horner, M. A., a learned divine of the English Church, has begun to print the Gospels at Oxford. When his New Testament, with its English translation, is done, we shall be able to appeal much more safely to this valuable aid.

But we must go still farther into Africa and knock at the door of the Abyssinian Church. This church probably translated the New Testament into Ethiopic in the fourth or fifth century. There is something singular about the Abyssinian Church. The Jews in very ancient times had pressed into Abyssinia from southern Egypt and they exercised a great influence there—so great that the language of the New Testament translation exhibits various Jewish or Aramaic ingredients. And even to-day the Church is said to retain in its practices much that is clearly Jewish. This is for us a token of the conservative character of the Abyssinian Church, and makes its text only the more interesting and valuable. If a church be separated by differences, by disagreements, by contests about questions of doctrine or order, from the neighboring churches, the Bible that it uses is only the more likely to remain untouched by the changes that are going on in the general stream of Christianity. Much as separation is to be deplored for many reasons, it has in this respect a good influence because it preserves tradition. Both the Abyssinian Church and the Coptic Church were in this way hedged in, and in that far their testimony is all the more valuable to us.

If we leave Egypt and return through Syria towards the north, we reach Armenia, a land associated with many of the ancient stories of human experience. The Armenian Church was most intimate with the Syrian Church and must have shared with it in its literary and theological studies and researches, even though we have thus far no account of that early time. I have no doubt that the libraries of Armenia, if once thoroughly examined, will give us much of great value for the history of the beginning of the Christian Church. Mr. Conybeare has of late brought forward surprising documents from Armenia. One of them is intensely interesting for those who study the text of the New Testament. The last part of the Gospel of Mark—xvi, 9-20—is, as we have long known, not a part of the original Gospel. There is in a few manuscripts another and shorter end for the Gospel, but that also is not genuine. Of course, we should like very much to find the real end of the Gospel, the end that the writer himself added, for we do not suppose that he by some chance failed altogether to finish it. Even if, however, we cannot find the real end, we should like to know where the usual end—these verses 9-20—came from, for that may help us to understand at what time the real end was lost. That is just what Mr. Conybeare's great discovery has done. He found in an old Armenian manuscript that this usual end really was taken from the works of Aristion. Aristion still lived at the beginning of the second century. He was a disciple of Jesus—that is not one of the twelve, but one who had heard him speak and had believed on him. This Aristion was one of the two men upon whose testimony Papias especially relied. Besides that, Aristion wrote a book called: "Narratives of the Words of the Lord," a book that was undoubtedly like parts of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It was simply another example of the process of turning tradition by word of mouth into written tradition. The proper end of the Gospel of Mark was probably lost at least early in the second century, and someone who had read this part of Aristion's "Narratives" placed these lines here as a suitable substitute for the missing end. After a while some scribe left Aristion's name out and these verses were copied regularly

as if they were by the author of the rest of the Gospel. Thus this problem — the problem as to the origin of these verses — has been happily solved by the intervention of this Armenian manuscript. If the Armenian translation had never done or should never do more than this for the text of the New Testament, we should be profoundly thankful for its existence. But look for much more from it. This end of Mark which is not genuine is nevertheless of the greatest interest. We might almost say that it is just as good as if it were genuine. Aristion was a hearer of the Lord and his report of the last moments may be entirely correct, and may be as authentic as anything in the New Testament. Thus we see that the question whether these verses belong to Mark's Gospel or not, is to be separated from the question as to whether these verses stand for a substantial fragment of early Christian tradition prized by the primitive Church.

We may here turn from the Eastern versions. Just as it is a great pity that American libraries have so few manuscripts of the Greek New Testament, so also it is too bad that they have so few of the Eastern translations. There are a few Syriac manuscripts in America, and Dr. Isaac H. Hall, of the Metropolitan Art Museum in New York, is one of the most thorough Syrian scholars living; but I know of no Coptic or Ethiopic manuscripts in America. Mr. S. Brainard Pratt, of Boston, Massachusetts, has an Armenian manuscript written in 1262 A. D. and illustrated. If the men who give such immense sums for pictures by modern French painters could only be persuaded to turn part of their wealth to the purchase of manuscripts, American libraries would soon offer a different kind of material for the study of philologists and theologians. And it is strange that Americans should give large prices for printed books, of which there are often two or more copies known, but that they are unwilling to pay for these very much older written books of which each one is a "single," a *unicum*. The number to be had is constantly diminishing and the prices are rising. When it is too late, everybody will be wishing to make a name for himself by giving his favorite university or college a costly manuscript.

Among the Western translations it will be enough to refer to the Latin ones and to the Gothic. In one respect these two are poles apart from each other, namely in the number of manuscripts. For the Gothic version exists in only three manuscripts — at any rate not in half a dozen — while the Latin versions are to be found in thousands of manuscripts. Let us take the Gothic first. It was translated by Bishop Ulfilas, who was born about 310 A. D. and died about 380. It presents a text which is in some points of view quite ancient. But then we only have fragments — some from the Gospels and some from the Epistles of Paul. This translation is so old that it were much to be wished that we had a complete copy of it. The order of the Gospels in the purple-silver manuscript at Upsala in Sweden, is Matthew, John, Luke, Mark. This arrangement is not seldom found in Western manuscripts. Perhaps it arose from the wish to have the two apostles together at the beginning so that the earlier book, Matthew, came first and then John, which was acknowledged to be later, and then the larger book by one who was not an apostle, and, finally, Mark, the shortest book. One other reason is possible. It often happens that the text was accompanied by a commentary. In some manuscripts the commentary was shortened as much as possible by referring, in the course of the Gospels, to similar passages already discussed. The commentator gathered his comments out of the writings of the Fathers and wrote the notes on the edges of the pages — that is to say, around the text — although a pretty clean margin was still left over. He began with the Gospel according to Matthew, and in it he gave a full commentary for verse after verse. Then he took in the other Gospel from an apostle, the Gospel according to John, because he found in it still a very great deal of fresh material to be commented upon — long passages that were not in Matthew at all. When he had finished these two he began to examine the Gospel according to Luke, and found in it some few new passages, although in a great many places he simply wrote

at the end of a series of verses: "See above, in Matthew." Only Mark was left, and here he found almost no passages that had not already been explained and the chances were that he copied out the text of Mark without a particle of commentary, leaving the reader to find it for himself in Matthew or Luke.

CHAPTER VI.

LATIN COPIES.

WHEN we approach the vast army of Latin manuscripts, we find that they resolve themselves into two parts, one of which is large and promiscuous and the other small but select. As can readily be imagined, the small part is the most ancient one. The Latin translation was probably first made in North Africa and not much more than a century after the death of Jesus. In Rome at that time the most of the Christians spoke and read Greek and they did not need the translation. In the course of nature the translation then spread through Italy, and the Latin-speaking Christians in different provinces modified the expressions of the translation to suit the dialect or the custom of the language in each particular district. Hence it came that the translation sometimes appears to separate into several translations because the words are different. There are not many manuscripts of the Old Latin. One, however, is interesting as perhaps having been written by Eusebius, bishop of Vercelli in northern Italy, who died as a martyr 371 A. D. The manuscript was kept for a long time in the open part of the cathedral at Vercelli—that is to say, in a place from which it could be easily picked up and handled and kissed as a great and worthy relic of the past. Of course, no book of delicate parchment could be handed about and treated in this way for years and years without being much injured, and this beautiful volume is now a poor, weak, faded remnant of what it originally was. I saw it in the private rooms of the library. It is now carefully sealed under a silken ribbon that crosses its open pages and a glass case keeps the dust from it. One of the few copies of the Book of Acts and of the Book of Revelation is found in the "Giant of Books" at Stockholm, Sweden. This immense book lies in a big case by itself and can with difficulty be moved about. Of the Catholic Epistles there are only a few fragments, and certain verses of the First Epistle of Peter are strangely enough lost and yet are legible, for before they were lost they were pasted into the binding of a book and when they were torn out of the book the traces of the letters remained in the paste. The letters were all backward; so Leo Ziegler took a mirror and read them off. There are so few remnants of this Old Latin in many books of the New Testament that scholars eagerly look for new ones in every old binding, and every now and then a few new verses come to light and are carefully compared with the Greek text, and with the older parts of the Latin translation, and with all the traces of the New Testament in Old Latin Fathers, in order to tell where the verses were translated.

The other part of the Latin manuscripts belong more or less strictly to the Vulgate. This Vulgate has an interesting history and a very long one. Those Old Latin manuscripts were, as we have seen, quite different from each other, since people had altered them so much. Toward the close of the fourth century, probably in 382 A. D., the Pope, whose name was Damasus, thought it was unfortunate that the Bible should be in such a forlorn and confused state. So he asked Jerome to take the manuscripts and to prepare a new text. It was like the revision of the English version in one way, but, instead of great committees in England and America, the one scholar had to do the whole work. Jerome (he wrote his name Hieronymus) was born in Dalmatia, had studied at Rome, had been in the East, had been made a priest at Antioch, and in

382 A. D. had returned to Rome. I think he must then have been about fifty-three years old. He was very learned and Damasus made a good choice. Hieronymus, then, revised the Bible and his Latin text was the text that everyone should have used. But people in general are slow to take up new things, even if they be good, and they like to stick to what they have always used; it is easier. Therefore, Jerome's translation was not kindly received. People complained of it everywhere in unmeasured terms, just as the amiable and yet fierce dean of Chichester, the late Dr. Burgon, attacked with might and main the English revisers, as if they had been criminals and as if their work were bad instead of good. For years and years the new and better translation was put aside. Yet gradually, if only gradually, it won friends for itself and was to a certain extent brought into use. As a result of this half-and-half way of doing things, the confused Old Latin translation, and the revision of Jerome, and perhaps some new thoughts of scholars in various countries, became so intermingled that it was very hard to tell what was quite old, what was half new, what was quite new, and what was totally bad. Every now and then somebody tried to clear out the errors and the confusion from the text. But in spite of Cassiodorus, and Alcuin who gave his revised copy to Charlemagne in 801 A. D., and of Theodolf of Orleans, and of Lanfranc of Canterbury, and of Hugo of Saint Caro, and of Roger Bacon, the text remained bad. We may say that it really still remains bad, but at present there is good hope of a thorough change. John Wordsworth who is now bishop of Salisbury, his chaplain, Henry Julian White, Prof. William Sanday of Oxford, Dr. Samuel Berger secretary of the Protestant Theological Faculty at Paris, and Dr. Peter Corsen of Berlin have all done much to make the text better. Bishop Wordsworth has already issued a new edition of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and it is to be hoped that he will have the strength to finish the whole New Testament — yes, the whole Bible. The best manuscript of the Gospels in the Vulgate translation is the "*Codex Amiatinus*," now in the Laurentian library at Florence. It was written shortly before 716 A. D. at the order of Ceolfrid, abbot of Jarrow and Wearmouth in the north of England, and he started to carry it to Rome but died on the way at Langres, France, on the 25th of September, 716 A. D. Probably his companions carried the great book on to Rome. There it remained for a long time in the Cistercian monastery on Mount Amiata — whence the name Amiatinus — and finally it reached Florence. America has a few, but so far as is known only a few, manuscripts of the Vulgate. There are at least three at Harvard, one in the Astor Library, and one in the library of Mr. Irwin at Oswego, New York. Mr. Irwin's copy is a splendid manuscript of the Gospels written in golden letters on purple parchment; it was formerly in the great Hamilton library. Professor Wattenbach of Berlin read an article about it before the Royal Academy of Sciences at Berlin, and Dr. Samuel Berger of Paris described it in his history of the Vulgate. The national library at Paris and the British Museum have a great many Vulgate manuscripts, and many a smaller library possesses at least a few precious old copies, as for instance the library of the Trinity College at Dublin, the library at Stronghurst, that at Durham, that at Würzburg, and that at Wolfenbüttel.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FATHERS.

THE fact has been touched upon, that even less ancient manuscripts, and manuscripts with a less peculiar text, may be of use in studying the history of the text of the New Testament. The translations to which we have called attention give much information in this direction, for anything found in the Syriac translation points to the presence of the particular thing in Syria or in the neighborhood of Syria and not, for example, in Spain; and anything in the Coptic translation speaks for a text in Egypt and not in Italy. But we can go farther in this direction—farther towards determining the place of texts—by turning to the writings of the Christian Fathers, and these Fathers will also help us tell definitely certain things about the time at which given readings were in use. One important general conclusion which the Fathers of the fourth century force us to draw, is that all the main defects of the Greek text were at that time—the fourth century—in existence. Before this was known, scholars sometimes spoke of trying to find the text of the fourth century, and of their readiness to be satisfied with that. Now, however, we know that several kinds of text were then in use, and that we do not gain anything of value by simply going back to the fourth century. What we wish to do, and need to do, is to distinguish between the good texts and the bad texts, between good readings and bad readings. The Fathers can help us much when we are able to say precisely what they considered the exact reading. If a preacher gives a passage in a sermon, we shall only feel sure that he has quoted exactly if we discover upon examination that he is accustomed to do so; otherwise we are apt to think that he simply quoted in general so as to have the Scripture authority for his support, without caring about the precise words. Preachers in the haste of sermon writing often dash down a Scripture sentence in this inaccurate way. Dr. Ezra Abbot showed that no one of nine places, in which Jeremy Taylor quoted a text from John, agreed with the English version, and that in only two of the places Taylor agreed with himself. If one of the Fathers quotes a passage in controversy with another, we look carefully to see that his opinion in the contest has not led him to warp the words in some way. If a Father quotes long passages, verse after verse, then we feel sure that he took down the New Testament book and copied the words off. And if, finally, he goes carefully to work and discusses the readings and says what is in the manuscripts before him and what other authors read, then we know as much as we could wish to learn from him. The older, the earlier, a Father is, the more valuable his testimony is. If we only had the Greek of Irenæus's work "Against All Heresies," we should learn a great deal that is new. The Latin translator does not appear to have troubled himself to translate precisely the texts which Irenæus quoted. Clement of Alexandria was a great scholar and he quoted a great deal in his writings, both from sacred and from profane books. Origen, the mighty champion of Christianity, the man of profound learning, and of unbounded industry, and of unlimited devotion, wrote a large number of books and quoted much from the Bible. Unfortunately the Church was so ignorant as to condemn many of his works as heretical and thus they have been lost. But aside from his other writings Origen paid especial attention to the text of the Bible. He wrought through the text of the Old Testament and wrote the original text and the various translations that he had at hand in six columns—perhaps in some places in eight—so that the text could be very precisely determined. For my part I believe that he also studied particularly the text of the New Testament, even though we have no word of a Hexapla for it. Origen has, nevertheless, also a value for us as showing

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A FACSIMILE OF A LEAF OF THE ALEXANDRIAN MS., FROM A COPY IN THE LIBRARY OF CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

John iv, 42 — v, 1-14.
Reduced from the original.

how a Father could make mistakes or draw wrong conclusions, even when he tried his very best to give the original reading. In discussing John i, 28, he tells us calmly that almost all manuscripts have the reading Bethany, and we know how old his manuscripts must have been — far older than any that we have now. But, instead of accepting the testimony of these witnesses, he goes on to say that he had gone to Palestine and that there was no such place there, as if many a village had not been destroyed in the hundred and fifty years that had passed! And he says it must have been Bethabara, and that is clear for him because the allegorical meaning of the name suits. After all, the great thing for us is the clear testimony to the reading of his manuscripts. That is just as good for us as if we had for this passage a half a dozen or a dozen manuscripts of the second century before us. Indeed, it repeatedly happens that we do not accept a Father's judgment about a reading, although we are deeply grateful to him for telling us what various copies of the New Testament in his day read. At about the same time as Origen, there lived two Latin Fathers who are of great value to us. One was Tertullian, a Christian lawyer at Carthage and Rome. Curiously enough, he gives us a very strange reading in the Lord's Prayer, a reading of which we find no sign anywhere else. He gives it: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Thy kingdom come." The other of the two is Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, who died in 258 A. D. He published "Testimonies," which we might call "Scripture Proofs," and thus he copied passage after passage at length, so that the book is a treasure for the study of the text. The Father who was mentioned above as revising the Latin version, Jerome, must also be named here, for in his studies, and his journeys, and his translation and revision, he came to know a great deal about the manuscripts and he often tells us precisely what he read in different ones.

These are, then, the chief witnesses for the text of the New Testament: The Greek manuscripts, the various ancient translations, and the Fathers. It is, in a different sense, a vast "cloud of witnesses." Let us cast our eyes over the centuries and ask what, in general, the character of the testimony in each age is. During the very first centuries but little can be expected, and yet one book is there. It is the letter of the Church at Rome to the Church at Corinth, about 96 A. D., and it is usually called Clement of Rome, because Clement is supposed to have been one of the chief presbyters of the Church of Rome at that time and to have written this letter. At that early date the Christians were only just beginning to use the books that were later to compose the New Testament. We, therefore, are not surprised to find that the Old Testament is the chief source for the quotations in this letter. Still, as if to give us the assurance that our New Testament books, with the same contents as later, were then in the hands of these churches, the writer quotes from the Gospels, although not from John. He quotes also from the Epistle to the Romans — the epistle that his, the Roman Church, had received about forty years before from Paul. Aside from this the Epistle to the Hebrews is used, and there are various expressions which seem to have been drawn from striking verses in our New Testament.

In passing to the second century we recall the fact that the Old Latin, the Old Syrian, and the two main Coptic versions probably were made during this period. Among the writers we find Barnabas, Ignatius, Polycarp, Papias, and Tatian, but the three chief ones are Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Clement of Alexandria. Besides these we receive every now and then a little evidence from some of the heretics or Gnostics of that day, whose words are professedly given by Hippolytus or by other writers, but we are not yet quite certain of the genuineness of these quotations. In the third century we still have no Greek manuscripts, and we have no new versions, but we find, apart from Dionysius Alexandrinus, and Gregory Thaumaturgus, the very full and important authors Origen, Hippolytus, Methodius, and the Latin writers Tertullian and Cyprian. With the fourth century the Greek manuscripts open their pages to us, namely those great manuscripts the "*Codex Sinaiticus*" and the "*Codex Vaticanus*,"

besides a fragment of First Timothy. Here, too, comes the Gothic translation and perhaps the Ethiopian. And a manuscript of the Latin translation, that one at Vercelli, was written in this century. Moreover, this is a great century for the Fathers, for church writers, and for more or less heretical writers, who wrote in Greek, Syrian, and Latin. The names of Cyril of Jerusalem, of Amphilochius, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa are worthy of mention, but they are overshadowed in reference to the text by Eusebius of Cæsarea, Athanasius, Chrysostomus, and Epiphanius. The Syrian writers Aphraates, Ephraem, Jacob of Nisibis, and Titus of Bostra, and then such Latin writers as Hilary, Lactantius, and Ambrosius yield in importance to Augustine and Jerome, while a host of lesser names cluster around them. The fifth century offers us eight fragments of Uncial manuscripts and adds the "*Codex Alexandrinus*" and the "*Codex Ephraemi*." The Armenian translation comes in here and also nearly twenty manuscripts of Syriac, Egyptian, and Latin versions.

In the Fathers we have Theodore of Mopsuestia, Basil of Saleucia, and Theodot, and then the four chieftains, Andrew of Cæsarea, Theodoret, Cyril of Alexandria, and Victor of Antioch. Victor of Antioch busied himself with Mark.

Andrew of Cæsarea wrote a commentary on the Book of Revelation, the chapters of which have already been referred to. As a matter of fact Andrew has so taken possession of the Book of Revelation that it is not easy to find manuscripts that have not been influenced by him or by his text—by the text used in his commentary. Of the "edition" of the epistles that Euthalius published in this century, we have spoken above. Among the many Latin Fathers of this period, it will be enough to mention Fulgentius of Ruspe, Rufinus, Sedulius, and Vigilius Tapsensis. Rufinus translated many a book of earlier Fathers from Greek into Latin, and in some cases the original is lost, so that we owe our knowledge of these works in these cases to his industry. Unfortunately, however, he did not hesitate to correct the works that he translated, so as to make them suit him or the church better, or to bring the Bible quotations into harmony with the text to which he was accustomed. In this respect, he is a hindrance and not a help to critical research. The sixth century brings us a couple of dozen Greek manuscripts, or fragments of Greek manuscripts, of which the "*Codex Bezae*" and the "*Codex Claromontanus*," with the purple manuscripts of the Gospels, are especially interesting. One of the purple manuscripts is but a few scattered leaves at London, Vienna, Rome, and on Patmos. Another is the manuscript that Gerhardt and Harnack found at Rossano, the manuscript with beautiful pictures. Another was discovered by the Abbé Pierre Batiffol at Berat. And another has, I am told, just been bought in the East. This century sees the preparation of the "Philoxenian" (Syriac) translation. More than thirty Syrian manuscripts date from the sixth century, eleven Old Latin manuscripts, sixteen Vulgate manuscripts, and the three Gothic manuscripts. Several Greek writers flourished at this period, but no very important ones. Of Latin writers we must name two. The first one is Cassiodorus who was a great statesman, but who then gave himself up to theology and to theological education. He tried his best to have the Latin translation correctly and carefully copied. The other one is Primasius who, like Andrew of Cæsarea, wrote much about the Book of Revelation; his writings are very valuable for the text of that book. It may also be observed that perhaps two of the Greek Gospel lectionaries, or books of lessons from the gospels, were written in the sixth century. The seventh century only adds thirteen of the Greek Uncial manuscripts, and the most of these are mere fragments, and with these we may associate eight lesson-books. It was early in this century that Thomas of Heraclea, living as an exile in Egypt, corrected the "Philoxenian" (Syriac) translation; the revision is named the Harelsian, from Harkel or Heraclea. Fourteen Syriac manuscripts, eight Old Latin ones, and twelve of the Vulgate represent the versions here. The few writers are scarcely worth naming, unless we make an exception for Andrew of Crete, who may, however, be of the ninth century. But this will suffice for the review of the centuries. From the

seventh century onward the manuscripts are more numerous, but as a rule less valuable, and the writers decrease in number and importance, although Œcumenius of the tenth, Theophylact of the eleventh, and Euthymius Zigabenus of the twelfth, century did much to make the text of the New Testament more sure by adding to their form of it their full commentaries.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INTERPOLATIONS.

WE saw above that the present end of Mark does not belong to the Gospel. There are only a few long passages in the New Testament whose genuineness is in dispute. One of the most famous of these is found in the Gospel of John¹ and gives the story of the adulteress, whom Jesus sends away with the command to sin no more. These verses probably were not a part of the original Gospel. Nevertheless, they may be part of a very old tradition, a section from such book as Aristion's, or from the Gospel to the Hebrews. The scene itself is most vivid and real. The incident may be an actual one. It is true we may assume that these verses do not properly belong to the Gospel of John, but they may be older than it, and as true historically. Besides the actual omission in the best witnesses, the suspicious character of the passage is shown by the fact that the text in it is, perhaps, more corrupt than that of almost any other passage in the Gospels. Scarcely any two manuscripts are alike in their reproduction of these verses. One variation is worthy of remark. Everyone remembers that Jesus stoops down and writes upon the ground. It is usually supposed that he merely made strokes hither and thither with his finger as a sign that he was not paying any attention to the people who stood about him. But many old manuscripts add here the words: "the sins of each one of them"—that is to say, he wrote in the sand the sins that each man standing before him had been guilty of. The following sentence in the usual text says: "And they *hearing* [what he had answered] and smitten by their consciences went out one by one." Now, in a very few manuscripts I have found instead of "hearing" the word "reading," so that the picture becomes a wonderfully dramatical one. The men accuse the adulteress. Jesus stoops down and writes on the ground, for example, "Murder," and one of the eldest of the accusers, in the front row, reads the word and remembers, conscience-smitten, a crime that no one else living knew of; the face of the murdered man *rises* before him and he hurries away from the place, uncertain whether Jesus will perhaps tell it to the others. Then Jesus writes "Theft," and the next man remembers that ten years ago he appropriated the money that belonged to a defenseless widow, and he also rushes off. And thus it goes on until the ground is too hot for them all and Jesus is left alone with the woman. Is not that an interesting scene? There is no great authority for the reading, but the scene is quite possible, even with the other reading, and we seem to be hovering over the place and beholding the actions of the group of people. These two passages—the end of Mark and the story of the adulteress—are without doubt very old traditions, indeed. We have in the New Testament another, happily very short passage, that has no shadow of authority in early times. It is the words about the heavenly witnesses,² which the English revisers happily have removed from our Bibles. The said versions do not appear ever to have been in a Greek manuscript, unless possibly in one which was a translation here from the Latin text, until the sixteenth century—until after the first Greek New Testaments had been printed. The demand that they should be put into the text was a great mistake, and it is well that we have now succeeded in leaving them out.

¹ John vii, 53, to viii, 12.

² I. John v, 7, 8.

The manuscripts of the New Testament sometimes have at the end a subscription which tells us about the writer and the owner of the book. I found an interesting one in the gymnasium or school at Salonica, the ancient Thessalonica. It was in a lesson-book of the Gospels to which I gave the Greek number "seven." It read as follows, saving the place where a thief had scratched out the name of the monastery from which he had stolen it: "In memory of and for the forgiveness of the sins of the servant of the Lord, Nicholas, a monk and the president of the monastery —, who with longing acquired this holy book. It was written by Luke, a monk, and a sinner, and a wretch. Ye who read this book — priest, pastor, deacons — pray to the Lord for me. If, as being also a man, I have made mistakes, pardon me for God's sake. Amen. It was finished in the year 1072, the tenth indiction, at the time of the removing the bodily eyes of Romanus the king, the son of Diogenes, and of the coming of the godless Turks. Amen. Luke, a monk." Another manuscript, written in 1327 A. D. and now at Athens, tells at the end how the monks had been driven away from Mount Athos by the lawless race of the Musselmans, and were then staying at Berea. The scribe excuses his faults in writing; he had to copy off the Gospel lessons because they had no book of them for themselves and no duly practical writer could be found. The same volume has the prayer: "Remember, Lord, thy servant Michael the priest, who bound this Holy Gospel. Amen." And then we find also the words: "We further pray for mercy, life, holy peace, salvation, and remission of the sins of the servants of God, George, and Demetrius, and Mary." Another manuscript at Athens gives the sentence that often occurs in various forms in such books: "The hand that wrote this molds in the tomb, but the writing lasts till the most complete times" — that is to say, till time shall be no more. The scribe wrote in 1089 A. D. His name was Andrew and he was a notary and a "beautiful writer," a writer who could write fine books, engross deeds, and the like. Still, Andrew was afraid he had made some mistakes; so he added at the end: "And if there be any very little mistake, forgive me for Christ's sake." In another book written in 1732 A. D., the scribe made a great many errors, and he knew it and asked to be pardoned for his "immeasurable faults." A scribe in a volume at Venice took a much loftier point of view and said in excuse for his very incorrect writing, as he begged the readers to pray for him: "For nobody writes without writing wrong." A Gospel lesson-book at St. George's at Venice has a long double subscription. The first is from the hand of the scribe: "The present Holy Gospel was finished by me, the unworthy priest and first judge of the most holy metropolis of Lacedaemonia, Nicholas, the son of Malotros, and ye priests who shall hereafter turn its leaves, pray for me, the wretched one, so that the Lord may also forgive your errors in the awful day of his retribution." The second is from the hand of a priest who had received the volume as a gift: "Everyone who reads this Holy Gospel should pray for, and in the sacred offices remember, Nicholas, the son of Eustathius, who bought it and gave it to me the spiritual Isaiah so that I may remember him (in my prayers) as long as I live. After my departure from here (death) I am to leave it to some monastery, to whichever one I please. I received it in the year of Christ 1462, indiction 11." A subscription in a book at Bologna shows how exactly some scribes thought the date out: "This volume was finished on the third of March, at two o'clock on Monday under the rule of Constantine the Dueller and Zoe Born-in-the-Purple, and under the patriarch Michael, written by the hand of Sabas, a monk and priest. Ye readers pray for me to the Lord. In the year 1046, indiction 14." Sometimes a manuscript was used by the monastery like the death-roll in a family Bible, to contain the deaths of the monks or at least of the presidents of the monastery. At other times they wrote on the margins special events that took place. For example, in a manuscript at Carpentras there are notes about the occurrences of a pestilence on the island of Cyprus with the number buried on one day and how they put five in one grave in their haste. That was in the year 1438, and another pestilence came in 1575.

But we must not forget to remark the way in which scribes tried to keep their books from being altered or torn or stolen. It was easy to add or strike out when the book was in manuscript. Let us take the case of a copy of the Four Gospels at Paris and see how the monastery to which it belonged tried to secure its possession. The subscription reads: "The present book belongs to the most holy metropolis Xanthe, [to the monastery] of the honored Forerunner [John the Baptist], and whoever may wish to take it away from this monastery, may have the curses of the three hundred and eighteen divine fathers that were gathered together in Nicæa, and may he be condemned with Judas, and may he have the honored Forerunner for his accuser in the day of judgment." The three hundred and eighteen fathers of the council of Nicæa are most frequently called upon to curse book-thieves. Of course, a thief could easily tear out such a curse-bringing leaf, and thieves often did in this way spoil the volumes, and, therefore, we sometimes find the curse extended to anybody who removes the leaf. Cursing is a poor business, and the history of the manuscripts shows that it did not save them from harm nor from being stolen.

Caspar René Gregory.



JOHN THE BAPTIST.

BOOK XII.

FROM THE BIRTH IN BETHLEHEM TO THE CRUCIFIXION ON CALVARY.

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William Cleaver Wilkinson.

BOOK XII.

FROM THE BIRTH IN BETHLEHEM TO THE CRUCIFIXION ON CALVARY.

CHAPTER I.

THE ANNUNCIATION.

FOUR years before the beginning of the Christian era—that is, almost exactly nineteen hundred years ago—there was born in the East a babe who grew to be the greatest man that the world has ever seen. This man was the greatest of warriors, though he never drew a sword. He was the greatest of conquerors, though he never fought a battle. He was the greatest of kings, though he never occupied a throne. He was the greatest of legislators, though men never appointed him to the legislator's office. He was the greatest of statesmen, though he never sat in a cabinet. He was the greatest of judges, though he never wore the ermine. He was the greatest of philosophers, though he never named the name of philosophy. He was the greatest of teachers, though he taught in no school. He was the greatest of preachers, though he commanded no pulpit. He was the greatest of reformers, though he never urged what would be called a reform. He was the greatest among leaders of thought, though he was not what would be called a thinker. He was the greatest force in literature, though he never wrote a book. He was the greatest promoter of scholarship, though he was not what would be called a scholar. He was the greatest promoter of science, though he was not what would be called a scientist. It might fairly be added that he was the greatest of poets, though he never wrote a verse. This man put forth such pretensions for himself of right to dominion over others as no one else ever put forth, yet he was the meekest of men. He claimed such ownership of all things as no one else ever did, yet he denied himself and sacrificed himself beyond any example or parallel. He was the greatest of saints, for he never committed a sin. He was the greatest of sufferers, for he bore the sins of the world. This man's name was Jesus, and he had no other name. Others had borne the name before him. Others bore the name after him. But he is the man always meant when anyone speaks of Jesus.

The circumstances of the birth of Jesus were remarkable, fitly resembling, in this respect, the circumstances of his career in life, as also those of the long sequel (yet unfinished) that has been unfolded in history. Some of the remarkable circumstances of his birth immediately attended that event; but some preceded it. We are to deal in this chapter with those which preceded it.

One of those precedent circumstances occurred partly in heaven. For an angel—his name is given, it was Gabriel—was despatched from heaven by God on an earthly errand closely connected with that extraordinary human birth which was then soon to take place. The destination appointed to this angel was perfectly definite and particular. He was to go to a country named, to a city named, and to a person named. The person named was a woman, a young woman; unmarried, and a virgin. It was Mary. There had been Marys before; there

have been Marys since; but what the angel told that Mary that day would, when fulfilled, result in making her incomparably the most illustrious of all the illustrious women that ever have borne her beautiful name. The city in which Mary lived, and to which, therefore, the angel Gabriel was sent, was Nazareth, in the province of Galilee, a country of Palestine. "The angel coming in to her said." Such are the simple words which tell all that we know of the time, and of the manner, of the angel's coming. In what appearance he presented himself, we know not. Whether by day or by night, we know not. But we know what he said. He said: "Hail, highly favored! The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women!" How simple, how courteous, how reassuring! We feel like applying Milton's epithet, and calling Gabriel "the affable archangel." But Mary was troubled at the greeting of this visitor—gracious, nay, even deferential, as it was. And one cannot wonder. For, however the celestial messenger might veil his glory and accommodate himself to the character and the state of the young Galilean maiden, however sincerely respectful he might seek to be, and be, still there was something that could not but startle in such an apparition. Mary pondered; but she did not speak. The angel saw her trepidation, and he addressed himself to that. "Fear not, Mary," he said. That familiar name! Her own from earliest recollection, how the sound of it must have calmed her! And his gentle "Fear not!" Then he went on and said: "For thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

What an august announcement, with what exquisite simplicity and dignity conveyed! We do not naturally think of politeness, of courtesy, of complaisance, as a trait or characteristic of the Supreme Being. But may we not—must we not—if we think deeply and truly, think of this message from God to Mary, brought by an angel and by that angel delivered so beautifully—must we not think of it as an act, on God's part, of divinely considerate politeness? God might have made this chosen woman Mary the mother of his Son without apprising her beforehand of the unique honor to which she was elected. But he would prepare her for the things that were to be. He might have done this by sending her a vision or a dream. That way he had sometimes taken, when he wished to communicate a purpose of his to a selected one among the children of men. He would, as we shall soon see, take this way again in the case of a man to whom Mary was very nearly related. But a dream sent to Mary would not do her the honor, the high and open honor, that he wished to bestow on the elected mother of his Son. God would have Mary herself know, and he would have his angels also know, that she was one who, for his own sake, doubtless, and for the sake of her Son to be, still more than for her sake, the King of heaven delighted to honor. He would send an angel, not a dream, to be his messenger to her. The angel was, perhaps, even an archangel. There may have been yet another reason for the divine forewarning to Mary. In the case of a heart so pure as hers, some previous consciousness of her high vocation to such motherhood would serve to ennoble her character, and so to qualify her better for her future part, by feeding her mind with solemn thoughts during the period that was to intervene before her child was born.

Mary's behavior was just that lovely blending of docility, of faith, and of maidenly modesty, that one sees now to be most fit in a woman chosen to such a destiny. She spoke to the angel. Her instinctive, irrepressible maidenly scruples overcame in her all lingering fear; as also apparently for the moment they quite effaced from her mind all thought of the unparalleled privilege and distinction conferred upon her. She said: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" Now, Mary, though still unmarried, was already betrothed. This meant, according to the manners of her place and her age, that she, by a public ceremony, which,



THE ANGEL'S SALUTATION.

though not marriage, was as sacred as marriage, had bound herself to be in due time the wife of a certain man; who, in his turn, having given a reciprocal pledge, regarded himself, and was regarded by his neighbors, in much the same light as if he were already her husband. There must, then, have glanced through the mind of this bride to be, a thought of her affianced, one apparently as stainless in character as she was herself. But whether or not Mary thought at this moment of Joseph, she said only what we have already seen. The angel, as if he revered in Mary the motive that prompted her question, answered it with a majesty of simplicity befitting his own celestial rank; befitting likewise the august, the awful, purport of what he had to say: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth thy kinswoman, she also hath conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her that was called barren. For no word from God shall be void of power."

Mary's manner of receiving this communication from the angel was the perfection of what was fit and felicitous. The chief mark of it was humility, that truest humility which consists in absolute, instant obedience. Making no protestations of her own unworthiness to be singled out from among women for an honor so inconceivably great, she simply said: "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

MARY'S VISIT TO ELIZABETH.

Mary had accepted her vocation with a composure inimitably serene, a composure that could have had but one spring, namely, such limpid obedience as hers. But the name of her cousin Elizabeth pronounced by an angel from heaven in communication of such tidings concerning her, stirred the placidity of her spirit with an eagerness of sympathy, perhaps of chastened curiosity, that she could not resist. She must see that cousin Elizabeth and see her at once. What a charming touch of nature was here! With no further delay, we may suppose, than was needful, Mary started for the hill country of Judea, where her kinswoman lived. She journeyed "with haste." Her heart went before her, beating quick with desire to be there. She found the house of Zachariah; she went in and saluted Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was perhaps alone in the room where her visitor found her; but more than she herself heard the salutation of Mary. Elizabeth, too, was soon to become a mother, and her babe, five months old, still unborn, leaped within her at the sound of Mary's voice. That babe was John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ. His unconscious instinct prophetic told him even then, and it thrilled him with generous joy, that the mother of his Lord was nigh. Elizabeth was now filled with the Holy Spirit and she responded to Mary's salutation with words wiser and higher than she could herself, even with premeditation, have framed. She raised her voice in speaking, so much we know; and we can imagine that it was with a kind of triumphal chant that she spoke. The process of translation cannot destroy the noble rhythm of the language: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me? For behold, when the voice of thy salutation came into mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a fulfillment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord." It was an interchange of psalmody between the two that must have surprised them both. The passage is too familiar to need repeating here.

It deserves to be noted in passing that Elizabeth had performed a signal act of obeisance to Mary, in addressing her as she did. Elizabeth was a woman advanced in years, while Mary, as we may assume, was in the bloom of her youth. When it is considered what respect to age was observed and enforced among the Jews, it appears very striking that Elizabeth should at once have deferred, with such a grace of humility, to her youthful kinswoman. The deference

paid was to Mary as mother of Elizabeth's Lord. One remembers that deep saying of the Apostle Paul: "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." That qualification Elizabeth then had; for on the present occasion she was "filled with the Holy Spirit." This Luke expressly tells us.

Mary remained as guest with Elizabeth about three months and then returned to her home in Nazareth. It would be an idyl of sweet and holy home life such as was never yet written, if we could have, in the style of narrative and description found nowhere except in the Bible, the story and picture of those rural three months of communion between Elizabeth and Mary. We must content ourselves with only that first scene of it already presented; for only so much is given us in the accounts of the evangelists.

Of one thing we may be quite sure. The chief topic of the mutual talk between the cousins, was the wonderful coincidence—coincidence and contrast both at once—in their several experiences as miraculous mothers to be. It could not but have been, to each one of the two, a most strengthening and comforting reassurance as to the solid reality of her own solemn, peculiar vocation from God. Human nature is in its basis one and the same, from age to age, and from race to race, of men. We need not for one moment imagine those Hebrew women to have been free from the occasional invasion of doubts and misgivings. We may be sure they sometimes asked themselves whether, after all, they were not, in their extraordinary experiences, the subjects of mistake and delusion. Especially did Mary need the most abundant support for her faith and her obedience, to sustain her through that peculiarly trying ordeal of silent months which she saw herself appointed to undergo. It was divine wisdom, shown in divine complaisance, that word from the angel to Mary about Mary's kinswoman Elizabeth. It would be impossible to conceive an expedient, short of continued immediate miraculous intervention from God, better adapted to furnish to Mary the needed confirmation of her faith and, besides that, chance of the secret delicate sympathy needed, than was the expedient actually employed, namely, that announcement to her of Elizabeth's condition, kindred, yet contrasted, to her own.

Traits like these in the New Testament narrative put it at immeasurable remove from the possibility of its being supposed the invention of the imagination of men. The spirit of myth would have multiplied miracle. The spirit of truth limited miracle to the actual fact. And it was according to a principle which God seems always to observe—the principle of strict parsimony, forbidding needless display of the supernatural—that Mary should thus have been left, as she was, to the perfectly natural resource of drawing sympathy and support from her kinswoman Elizabeth. That resource was sufficient—made sufficient by the simple fact of Mary's having received her first and her only intelligence of Elizabeth's condition from the lips of an angel.

Both the annunciation and the salutation thus described have furnished subjects for painters. The highest artistic genius and skill have found their opportunity in representing on canvas to the eye, the imagined persons, postures, and environments of these exquisite Scriptural stories. Because artists have sometimes chosen, from the Bible and from church history, such subjects for treatment with the brush, as, for instance, the Crucifixion, the Descent from the Cross, the Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, it has been said that the influence of Christianity has debased art, by substituting haggard, emaciated figures for the blooming and graceful forms, "gods and godlike men," which were the ideals of antique pagan painting and sculpture. But certainly never did subjects inherently more fit and inspiring tempt the imagination and the hand of the artist than are supplied in the Annunciation, and in the Salutation of Elizabeth. For proof of this, if any were needed, let witness the pictures actually produced on these subjects.

CHAPTER II.

THE BIRTH.

THERE came a time, we know not exactly at what point in the course of the history, when Joseph had to learn, from some source, the condition and the expectation of his betrothed. How he first learned it, we can only conjecture. But when he did learn it, either he was not told the whole story of Mary's amazing experience, or else, being told it all, he did not believe the miraculous part of it. Whichever alternative was the true one, Joseph was purposing and planning in his thought to put Mary away from him—that is, cancel the betrothal, and not marry her. It was the impulse of a man who looked out for his own blameless repute.

Now, Joseph could proceed in either one of two ways. One way would expose Mary to open shame; the other would, as far as possible, shield from the public eye her apparent fault and misfortune. He chose the latter way. But before he took the step that would be decisive, God intervened. Joseph had a dream in which an Angel of the Lord appeared to him. The angel is not named. Perhaps it was an undistinguished one among the innumerable heavenly host of those that wait on God to do his pleasure. This angel, speaking to Joseph, called him by name, with significant allusion accompanying to Joseph's rightful place in the royal line of Judah. He said: "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." Joseph was not disobedient to the heavenly vision and Mary was brought under the grateful shelter of acknowledged relationship to a husband. She, in that sacred privacy, accomplished the months of her patience and her hope.

But when now her time drew nigh, behold, a surprising coincidence of history. Galilean as Mary was, and Nazarene, she must yet bear her miraculous child, not at Nazareth, and not in Galilee, but in Bethlehem of Judea. This place of nativity for the Christ of God had been long before announced. No miracle was resorted to for bringing the necessary fulfillment of prophecy about; but what appeared to be (although in truth it was not) the great main movement of human history was easily wielded in the hand of divine providence to effect this purpose of the divine will. The Roman emperor of the world, at exactly the meet moment, issued a decree which, without his meaning it or dreaming it, caused the birth of the Lord's Anointed to occur where ancient Hebrew prophecy had predicted that it would occur. A census of the Roman empire was ordered. In accordance with the wisely indulgent policy of the mighty despotism of Rome, the provinces of Palestine were permitted to set about obeying the imperial mandate in their own chosen ancestral way. The Jewish practice was for each family to report itself for registration at that city which, to the head of the family, was in a peculiar sense "his own." Now, to Joseph, he being of the house and lineage of David, that city was Bethlehem. To Bethlehem accordingly Joseph, with Mary, went. The distance from Nazareth to Bethlehem (some five miles south of Jerusalem) was about eighty miles. The journey would naturally occupy from four to six days. Arrived at Bethlehem, they tarried there, and there the hour came upon Mary and her babe was born.

The earthly life of Jesus, from the first of it to the last of it, was, like the manner of speech that he loved to use, full of paradoxes. Never in any other case was birth of babe into the world at once so magnificent and so mean, so illustrious and so obscure. The parents of Jesus—his reputed parents—though they could both of them trace their line of descent back to King David, were poor. We know this, not from the fact that Joseph was a worker in wood,



CORREGGIO.

THE NIGHT.

or carpenter," as he is now customarily called. Such he might have been, though a man in easy circumstances. For it was a wholesome practice with the Jews to put their sons, whatever the standing and circumstances of the fathers, to the learning of a trade. Generally it would be the trade become hereditary in the family. But when, according to the law of Moses, Jesus, as a firstborn child of his parents, was brought by them to the temple at Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord, the offering that accompanied was the one appointed for the poorest of the poor, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Such was the parentage of Jesus. And at Bethlehem, the quarters that Joseph and Mary occupied apparently corresponded. For the newborn babe, wrapped, as the custom was, in swathing bands, found his first resting place in what is now called a "manger." That name is not unfit; and still, unless we consider the customs of the time and the place, we shall perhaps form a mistaken idea of the situation. It was, in fact, a case of not unnatural adjustment to circumstances, such adjustment as is still practiced in the same country by travelers. But with every relief thus thrown upon the character of the infant Savior's accommodation at Bethlehem, yet what a lowly birth was his! How few human births, not absolutely abject and squalid in misery, have ever been lowlier! That is one side of it. But look at the other side.

In the region about Bethlehem, there were, at that early winter season, shepherds staying out of doors, and so, under the open sky, keeping their flock by night. The flock that they tended was perhaps made up of sheep destined for sacrifice in the temple at Jerusalem. These men were chosen to be recipients of a remarkable revelation from heaven. The choice of them was, so far as we are told, for no character of special worthiness in them to invite the choice. It seems, for all the indication given, to have been an exercise of the free, undeserved, electing grace of God. Their situation, indeed, at the moment, and their employment, were opportune. They were waking and were out of doors. They were thus ready to observe that which happened. An Angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone around them. The apparition appalled them. But the angel spoke reassuring words. He said: "Be not afraid; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: For there is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you; ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger."

Following this announcement, and following it suddenly, there came a further celestial revelation. This time, ear as well as eye was filled and overpowered. There was no longer one angel, with one angelic voice; but, surrounding the messenger from on high that had already spoken, there hovered a multitude of the heavenly host who joined in a choral hymn of praise to God and of joyous proclamation to men: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men."

The heavenly vision and the heavenly voices passed to those shepherds. But, simple men as, of course, they were, they were yet, it would appear, not altogether unworthy to have seen and heard what they did. For they believed. They said to one another, "Let us go, let us go now unto Bethlehem, and"—not learn whether that voice was, indeed, from heaven and whether what it told was true, but—"see this thing that is come to pass." As they did not doubt, so they did not wait; and they did not loiter on the way. They went "with haste." And they were rewarded; for they found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying, as had been described to them, in the manger. Naturally, they then spread far and wide what had been said to them from heaven concerning the child; and naturally, too, wonder sprang up everywhere with the spreading of the news. With many that heard, the wonder may have been short-lived; but as for Mary she treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. There were other things in due sequel to occur concerning the child, which would give the musing mother more matter for thought. Of those other things, we may mention first a



HIDA.

THE THREE WISE MEN OF THE EAST.

noteworthy incident, which, probably, however, was not the first one to happen. Certain strangers from a distance—how great distance, we know not, that they were “from the East,” is all that is told us—appeared in Bethlehem and paid a visit to Mary’s place of sojourn. We naturally figure these strangers as venerable in appearance, and we can hardly avoid making their number three, such being the quite groundless, but prevailing, tradition regarding them. In the Scripture narrative they are called magians, or sages — “wise men,” our Bibles translate the Greek word. Beyond this character attributed to them, and the fact just mentioned that they came from the East, all is mere conjecture, as to who, how many, what, and whence, they were. What, on their arrival at the house, they saw, is not said by Scripture to be Mary, with her child, but the child with his mother. They fell prostrate in obeisance, not to her, but to him; not to her along with him, but to him alone. They did more. They opened their treasures and presented to him gifts. The gifts were such as befitted a prince to receive; they consisted of gold, of frankincense, and of myrrh. With the bestowal of these gifts, their signs of homage paid as to a sovereign, the errand at Bethlehem of those mysterious strangers seems to have been accomplished. They went away.

Their return journey, however, they made by a different course from that by which they had come. This change of course on their part was occasioned by a dream sent them from God. God’s warning to them was not to see Herod again. In coming, they had most naturally betaken themselves first to Herod, the king. He, they thought, should surely be to them the best source of information concerning the royal birth of which they had taken that journey to the Jewish capital, Jerusalem, to inquire; for the birth was of one destined to be “King of the Jews.” Perhaps the “star” that they saw was, without other clue to the fact, interpreted by them to mean this birth. But we know that there was rife among the nations at this time, a rumor of one expected by the Jews soon to appear, who should be to them a great ruler and deliverer. This widespread rumor was doubtless due to that dispersion of the Jews which had already scattered them in considerable numbers all over the habitable globe. Every pilgrim Jew, wherever he went, bore with him as a comfort, a support, and a boast, his hope of the promised Messiah to redeem Israel from the shame and the distress of their bondage to the Gentiles. The recourse of the wise men to Herod had an undesigned and unexpected effect. They at first learned nothing to their purpose from Herod; but Herod at once learned something that he thought to his purpose from them. He was profoundly disturbed; and so was the city of Jerusalem with him. Herod’s character was such, and such were his office and power, that his capital city inevitably felt many of the emotions that were first felt by the king. Herod thought that his royal dynasty was threatened. We know from Josephus that he was sensitive and jealous on this point, to the extent even of putting to death those of his own kindred whom he deemed not sufficiently loyal to himself and his house. Fresh suspicions and fears were now awakened in that uneasy royal heart. A “King of the Jews” born somewhere, of whom *he* knew nothing! With long-exercised art of concealment, he veiled his thoughts from his visitors. On some pretext, he seems to have detained the wise men in Jerusalem, while he should make a certain remarkable inquiry; an inquiry for the purpose of which he called together the chief priests and the scribes of the people. Herod must either have had some effective firsthand knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures—though an Idumean (Edomite) he played the part of a Jew; or else, which is perhaps more probable, he had learned through general report concerning the nation’s expectation of a great personage to arise among them in the character of a champion and a king. The remarkable question that he propounded to his Jewish advisers was this: “Where is your expected Christ to be born?” “In Bethlehem of Judea,” was their reply.

Herod had now got part of what he wanted. He next secretly summoned the wise men into conference, in order, if possible, to get from them the rest. They had told him, in their



BIDA.

THE DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.

first audience, that they had seen the "star in the east" betokening the advent of the child whom they were thus come to Jerusalem to honor. Herod inquired now: "Exactly *when* did this star appear?" The answer of the wise men, he seems to have considered, furnished him the *time*, as the answer of the Jewish doctors had previously furnished him the *place*, of the appearing of the Christ. He would take measures accordingly, to make assurance doubly sure that there should be, here at least, no Messiah born to displace either him or his lineal successor on the throne. The measures that, in fact, he took were suitable to his character of craft and of cruelty. "Go to Bethlehem," said Herod to the wise men; "and when you have found the famous child, return and let me know. I shall wish to come myself and do him homage."

The Eastern strangers withdrew from the royal presence, and, guided now by the star, which seems at this juncture to have reappeared, to their surprise and their joy, they came, without need of further inquiry, to the very cradle-side of the child. For the bright phenomenon (called, perhaps, only from its star-like resemblance, a "star," whatever in its real nature it was) moved before them as they moved, until it reached a station where it stood directly over the place in which the young child lay. Thus star-led to Jesus, those favored pilgrims from the East did the acts of homage to the infant Lord which have already been described. Their visit and their worship may be taken as representing something far more than the mere individual impulse of the wise men themselves. Was it not also a symbol in act of the now slowly accomplishing approach which we are this day beholding, of the great and populous Orient to bow in submission and obedience at the feet of the ascended and glorified Redeemer of men?

The appearance and the disappearance in history of those wise men from the East have somewhat the same effect now to the imagination of the reader as their appearance and disappearance must have had then in the experience of Mary. They came to her out of mystery; and they vanished in mystery from her view and her knowledge. When ever, before or since, did any other group of nameless men go hand in hand together down such an endless, shining track of universal human fame?

With the adoration of the magi, the brilliant side was complete to the paradox of lowliness and lordliness in which Jesus was born. An historic atrocity must now follow to tinge with somber and with tragic the too-cheerful background against which, without that foil, the birth of the suffering Savior of mankind would be shown. Herod was enraged against the wise men for not coming back to him. His rage stirred up his cruelty. Poor royal wretch, he was himself at this time in the torturing vise of a terrible mortal disease, and no doubt the pangs that he suffered clouded his reason and drove him frantic. But his natural and habitual way was to be inconceivably truculent and brutal. He comes down to us distinguished, among many rulers that bore the same name, by the historic epithet "Great." "Herod the Great," he richly deserved to be called, if eminence in wickedness could constitute the title required. He was certainly one of the very wickedest men of whom history has given us record.

The barbarity that he now committed is but one in a long list of crimes, among which this is the most celebrated only because it is associated with the memory of the most celebrated of men; not at all because it was the most monstrous. Indeed, revolting as it justly seems, it would, but for its connection with Jesus, have been quite lost from human recollection. For Josephus, our chief authority in the history of Herod, writing up a frightful catalogue of Herod's outrageous misdeeds, passes this one in silence, as, perhaps, in his view, unworthy of mention. But Josephus may not have known of it. For it is not necessary to suppose—indeed, it is contrary to probability—that Herod accomplished the massacre openly. It was doubtless an instigated wickedness, instigated and bargained for by Herod; it may have passed, at the time, for a piece of private violence, the perpetrators of which—this is conceivable, their employer was quite capable of such perfidy—may even have been punished, instead of being

paid for it, by the perjured royal assassin-in-chief. It was nothing more than the murder of a number of innocent babes—all the male babes that there were at the moment in Bethlehem two years old and under, estimated to be at most some twelve or fifteen. The wail of the innocents slaughtered, the shrieks of the mothers bereaved, were doubtless loud enough in the hearing of the Lord God of Sabaoth; but they were not heard at the time by the nation at large, though they have never ceased to echo in the sympathetic ears of mankind. Such was Herod's way of making himself and his royal house secure against *that* threatening danger. Let *all* the male babes at the moment in Bethlehem perish at a stroke! Thus, at least, the one babe among them born to be King of the Jews, if such babe indeed there were, should not survive. But Herod reckoned without taking God into the account. God had been beforehand with the tyrant. Already he had warned Joseph in a dream: "Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." Joseph obeyed; he remained in Egypt until Herod died, which was not long after. (The tyrant died miserably of a loathsome disease. "Eaten of worms," is the frightfully suggestive phrase that describes in Scripture the end of a grandson of this monarch. The same expression would fit the case of the grandfather, who reached the age of seventy—notwithstanding his excesses. He attempted suicide at last—in vain—as an escape from his sufferings.) Then, again instructed by a dream from God, Joseph came back into the land of Israel. Because, however, Archelaus, like-minded son of Herod, was reigning in his father's stead (though over only a part of his father's kingdom), Joseph, afraid to go into Judea, and directed by yet another dream divinely sent, went into Galilee and took up his abode with the child and with Mary in the city of Nazareth.

THE PRESENTATION.

Up to the present point we have followed without interruption a series of incidents in the infancy of Jesus, that seemed to belong together in a natural order of sequence. We turn back now a moment to introduce one or two other incidents which happened meantime, but on which we have thus far bestowed no attention.

The divine child was duly circumcised at the customary age—eight days—at the same time receiving his name, Jesus, the name prescribed for him beforehand by the angel. At the close of forty days' time, he was taken to the temple at Jerusalem for the ceremony of presentation to the Lord. This rite was obligatory in the case of every firstborn Jewish child.

There could, we should suppose, have been nothing outward to distinguish this child from many another presented in the temple, at near the same time, for the same dedication. As has already been said, the parents must have been very poor, since they made the least expensive offering in their child's behalf that the law of Moses permitted. It was doubtless part of the wisdom of God that he who was to become, through suffering, the Redeemer of the world, should enter an earthly lot that would, even at this earliest point, bring him into sympathetic relation with the lowliest of his human brethren.

But there were not wanting at the temple circumstances that should after all make the presentation of Jesus conspicuous. There was a man in Jerusalem—perhaps only a sojourner there, by some divine coincidence brought thither at just this moment of time—whose character, as described by the sacred historian, fitted him beyond many to be let into the secrets of the counsel of God. This man's name was Simeon; and "Simeon," through him, has become almost a synonym for amiable and venerable sanctity of spirit and life. He was a just man and devout, who kept himself in an attitude of believing and hopeful patience, waiting for the consolation prophesied for forlorn and afflicted Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him, not apparently for one particular occasion alone, but as a habit of his life—a calming and steady, as well as an enlightening, power.

It had been revealed to Simeon by the Holy Spirit that however long he might have to wait for such fulfillment of his desire, he yet should not see death till his eyes had looked upon the person of the Christ of God. This aged sage and saint—aged, we think of him with certainty as being, although he is not expressly called so in Scripture—came one day into the temple with a prophetic sense divine, as would appear, possessing him, of something signal that day to happen there. For he came by the Spirit, it is told us by Luke. He was not to be disappointed. The parents of Jesus brought in their child, to fulfill the ritual requirements laid down by Moses touching a case like his. Whether or not Simeon waited for these first to be fulfilled, does not appear. Either before or after the ceremonies which constituted the formal presentation of the child to the Lord, the mood of thankful recognition and prophecy invaded Simeon's heart, at the same time uplifting alike his faith into vision and his utterance into song. "Now, Lord, lettest thou," so he broke forth, taking the child up in his arms, and, as we may conceive him, lifting his eyes toward heaven:

"Now lettest thou thy servant depart, O Lord,
According to thy word, in peace;
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples;
A light for revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of thy people Israel."

It was partly like a cry of release and relief, as if there was now nothing left for which the speaker wished longer to live. He does not pray for deliverance from life; he seems to recognize and to accept deliverance as that day graciously granted him. It was, he testifies, "according to the word" of the Lord. There had been an understanding established between the saint and his Heavenly Father that this was to be thus; and the saint did his part in acknowledging with thanks and with joy that his Heavenly Father had already done his.

There is a note in Simeon's "*Nunc dimittis*"—for so, from the words beginning it in Latin, this outburst of Simeon is sometimes called—there is a note here that should not be missed. It is not simply a blessing for Israel that Simeon recognizes in the child whom he holds in his arms; there is also in that child a light for a revelation to the Gentiles. This constitutes the very earliest express mention occurring in New Testament times of the Gentiles' share in the salvation brought in the first instance to Israel by the advent of Christ.

Joseph and Mary stood wondering by, to hear the things spoken by Simeon. After all that had happened, their wonder could not have been wonder as at a disclosure entirely novel. Rather, we may conjecture, it was wonder at an unexpected confirmation of what they already knew; perhaps, also, at that enlargement of this, just noted, which took in the Gentiles as fellow-heirs with the Jews of the blessing predicted. While the parents thus wondered, Simeon went on and blessed *them*, in words not presented at full in the record. But to Mary the mother, in particular, he said what must have mingled a mysterious bitter with the sweet of his prophecy: "Behold, this child is set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea, and a sword shall pierce through thy own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." The pangs to Mary the mother, that were to pierce her soul like the thrusts of a sword—those are all past and done now; healing long ago followed, and then a perpetual peace. But it still holds true that, through Jesus, the thoughts of many hearts are revealed. For Jesus is now, as he was while he lived on earth, as he has always been since, and as he forever will be, a touchstone character and person. Every man is brought out to view in his own true, deepest self, by the attitude that he takes—and some attitude every man must take, be it only the attitude of unconcern and neglect—toward Jesus. Thus is it that the profoundly searching prophecy of Simeon persists in an incessant process of fulfillment; and the thoughts of many hearts are even yet infallibly revealed.



BLESSING THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

As if in order that woman not less than man, or rather that both the two equal halves of the one whole humanity, should take part in saluting the infant Savior of the world, an aged widow also was present at the self-same moment in the temple, and she opened her mouth, along with Simeon — that is, in close sequel to him — in words not reported, concerning the child Jesus. Anna was this woman's name; and her father's name is also given, Phanuel, together with, further, the name of the tribe, Asher, to which she belonged. Anna is expressly styled a prophetess; a personage, she must have been, well known to the habitual visitors at the temple; for she made her home there, realizing for herself the blessing pronounced by the Psalmist on those that "dwell" in the house of the Lord. Connected with the extensive edifice called comprehensively the temple, and indeed architecturally one with that, were many attached buildings that afforded places of permanent residence for those engaged in the various services of the consecrated spot. This is probably what, thirty years or so afterward, suggested to Jesus the form of his saying: "In my Father's house are many mansions." From her chosen abode in one of the many mansions belonging to her Heavenly Father's house below, Anna the prophetess no doubt was soon after removed to take up her eternal residence in one of the many mansions belonging to her Heavenly Father's house on high. There she has since been learning every hour something new concerning him of whom in her earthly old age she faithfully spoke, according to her light, to all that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER III.

THE BOY OF TWELVE.

ONLY one more story remains to be told of that part of the life of Jesus which passed before his brief public career began. But that story is characteristic and beautiful. It is given us by Luke alone. "And the child grew and waxed strong, becoming filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him."

The foregoing scant information, repeated a few verses after in substance and almost in form, but hardly added to, is all that the frugal history of Luke — no one else tells us anything — reports concerning the childhood of Jesus, in Nazareth of Galilee. Nazareth was, in its natural aspects, a lovely home for the boy. It was a busy hamlet of some size, nestled high among limestone hills, out of the substance of which its houses, gleaming white in the Syrian sun, were built. Near was the great plain of Esdraelon rolling its waves of green crested here and there with flowers of many hues twenty miles or more away westward to the feet of Mount Carmel overlooking the sea. The slopes of the hills on which Nazareth lay, were no doubt in the days of the childhood of Jesus, terraced to the summits, and rich with the fruits of laborious tilth. Galilee, throughout its whole extent, swarmed with people; and these could find their sustenance only as they industriously made the most of the natural resources of both the waters and the soil. The waters abounded with fish and the soil was generously responsive to culture. Esdraelon is one of the most fertile plains or valleys in the world. Its fertility seems literally inexhaustible. For thousands of years, apparently without the application of manures, it has gone on yielding its plenteous, its undiminishing, harvests of grain. The prodigal bounty of the soil, as if to show that its strength is more than any amount of merely useful labor can tire, frolics everywhere into flowers bright and beautiful and various beyond what the present writer remembers to have seen anywhere else in the world produced by the wild

exuberance of nature. The hillsides round about are also gay in springtime with flowers. The voices of birds regale the ear, as the forms and colors of blossoms delight the eye.

Anid such scenes and conditions of physical nature, the boyhood of Jesus was passed. Few traces, however, of influence on his character, from the outward world that immediately environed him in his boyhood and youth, are to be recognized either in the words or the deeds of his manhood. The forms, it is true, under which he taught were in many instances affected by his own individual situation and experience in life. But that in him which in other men we should call by the name of genius, or of mental and moral bent—that deep determining something, that basis of personality, which constituted him what he was—remained to the last independent of any molding power from his circumstances.

Of the influence of his home life upon the boy, we know nothing; but we may with confidence conjecture much. The woman that could chant, in celebration of her choice by God to such motherhood as hers, the famous “Magnificat” of Mary—for by that name is sometimes called, from its commencing word in the Latin, the psalm of praise and rejoicing recited by Mary in saluting Elizabeth—was certainly a mother that would train, and that could train, her son from his tenderest years in knowledge of the Scriptures. That psalm itself is so much molded on Old Testament models of thought and of expression, that some critics have even denied to it any originality. Wise critics will, on the contrary, find in it precisely such human originality, and no other, as was fit to one like the author placed in a situation like hers; while also finding in it a breath of different inspiration that could come only from heaven.

Of the father we know little, but the little that we do know is all favorable to his character. If, as might seem, he was somewhat deficient in the stronger, more positive elements of manhood, such deficiency did not in the least disqualify him for dealing wisely and well with a son like his, who needed neither correction nor restraint. It could not but be that a devout believer such as Joseph was, would be prepared to stand in a kind of awe before the boy, whom yet he felt providentially bound to bring up as if he were indeed—though he was not—his son. It is delightful, and at the same time awe-inspiring, to think of the child Jesus in that unique relation which such a child must necessarily hold to one like Joseph standing in the father’s place, while not the father. Doubtless the divinity in Jesus was veiled sufficiently to Joseph, not to dazzle or to confound him. It was also, we must suppose, in some degree unconscious to the boy himself. At any rate, to whatever degree, great or little, hidden from being recognized by himself or by others, it certainly did not work to exempt Jesus from the duty of filial obedience. It is expressly told us that as to his parents, he was “subject to them.” Meantime, as also it is expressly told us—and that this, and, with a single exception, this only, should expressly be told us concerning his childhood, is worthy of note—meantime, “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.” This is said by the evangelist, *after* he has said that the boy had entered, noticeably it must have been, upon a course of being “filled with wisdom.” The increase spoken of would seem, therefore, to have been something much more than the ordinary advance in knowledge observable in children, keeping pace with their years. It is strikingly characteristic of the strict sobriety of the narrative of Luke, that no marvelous stories are told by him to illustrate his own strong general statement as to the mental proficiency of Jesus in his youth. The anecdote which constitutes the single exception already mentioned to this abstinence on his part, is hardly an exception.

It comes out incidentally in the narrative, that Joseph and Mary were in the habit of making yearly pilgrimages to Jerusalem at the time of the passover. On one of these occasions, the boy Jesus, having reached the age of twelve years, and now perhaps for the first time since his infancy visiting Jerusalem, remained behind in the city, after his parents had started on their return way to Nazareth. The lad was not missed, until a day’s journey in the

direction of home had been accomplished by the parents. There were, it appears, a considerable number of their kindred and neighbors, traveling with Joseph and Mary. The parents had supposed that their son was somewhere in this company; and naturally they were much concerned when they found that he was not. They retraced their steps all the way back to the city. It was not till the third day—that is, probably the third day after the homeward start of the parents without their boy—that they discovered him. He was in the temple, seated among the doctors of the law, hearing their discourse and asking them questions. Those that were present as witnesses of the scene were astonished at the Galilean lad's evident intelligence. The parents themselves seem to have been surprised by what they saw, quite as much as they were relieved and delighted. "They were amazed," is the strong expression of Luke. Mary gave voice to their emotions. She gently chided her boy. "Child," said she, "why didst thou thus deal with us? Behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing."

At first blush, our instinctive sympathies are with the mother in the case. We are tempted to feel that she had good ground for her tender reproof. It does not, on the face of it, look like quite a fair way of behavior for a dutiful son toward his parents. But Jesus in his reply admits no fault of conduct on his own part. He does not (so far as reported) express sympathetic regret at his parents' sorrow on his behalf. He merely expresses a surprise which seems almost to retort a certain blame on Joseph and Mary. He says: "How is it that ye sought me? [Why should you not have been clear where to find me?] Did ye not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

Now the fact that Jesus was sinless—this, by his own claim, not disputed even by his enemies ("Which of you convinces me of sin?" he asked them once, and they made no reply)—this fact obliges us to seek an explanation of his deportment on the present occasion. In the case of an ordinary twelve-year-old boy, we should not, without some adequate explanation to relieve his behavior, acquit him of blame if he should stay behind his parents in a strange city, they not knowing that he purposed doing so, still less having given him their approval in such purpose. What justified conduct like this in Jesus?

It is not necessary to suppose that there was any intentional, or even conscious, separation of himself from his parents on the part of Jesus. There may have been an innocent misunderstanding between the parents and the son as to the plan of the return. The parents perhaps assumed that the son knew what, in fact, he did not know, about the proposed time of the start homeward. They were occupied, it may be, with necessary preparations, while the son repaired to the temple, drawn by his instinct for "things divine." The preparations complete, the start, we may conjecture, was made without attention on the parents' part to the fact that their son was not among the company traveling with them. This might easily happen amid the bustle and confusion incident to the beginning of such a journey by such a number of persons. The boy meantime intent upon his object in the temple, and not aware of what was going on outside, stays hour after hour, until at last the day is spent. His parents will know where to find him, he reflects, and his mind, filial at once toward God, his Heavenly Father, and toward his earthly parents, abides in perfect peace.

What has thus far been said, has been said independently of anything supernatural in the character of the boy Jesus, or in the consequent relation subsisting between him and his parents. But we cannot properly leave this important consideration out of account. And in view of this consideration, it is not too much to say, that *if* fault was committed on either side, it was committed on the side of the parents rather than on the side of the son. Knowing, as those parents both of them knew, what the peculiar divine relation of Jesus was, having in addition observed, as they must have had abundant occasion to observe, through twelve years of that unique childhood in their son, what his transcendent character and mission were, they were bound to watch the signs of special impulse and development in their sinless child, and see to it

that, so far as lay in their power, he should, in spiritual things, have his own way, unhindered and unchecked. In accordance with this obvious duty on the parents' part, the waiting, if any waiting on either side were needful to be done, should have been rather done by them on their boy than by their boy on them, *as far as concerned*, for instance, *the matter of determining when he was to leave his business in his Father's house*. At any rate, the boy Jesus had a sense of a different, a paramount, obligation that might properly, upon occasion requiring it, transcend and override his obligation to his earthly parents. There should have been no conflict between these two obligations. Perhaps, in fact, there was none. But if, on the contrary, such conflict there was, the fault was not in him who rightfully made the obligation to God greater. It was in those rather, if any such there were, who interposed their claim in preference to God's.

We cannot fail to see that there was some imputation, however slight, of reproach in the mother's words to Jesus. We can as little fail to see that not only was there no confession following, from the son, of fault on his part, but instead there was such language used by him as may easily be understood to imply a certain sweet and gracious reflection of reproach and blame upon the parents. Their fault—if they committed fault—perhaps lay in something deeper than either the mere administering to him of undeserved reproof, or the failure to know where they would be sure to find their missing son. It may be that they had declined somewhat from the high spirit of faith and vision in which they began their relationship to Jesus before his birth and at his birth. We shall, as we proceed, come upon other occasions for observing Mary under some shadow of disapproval from her son. "Blessed among women," as she was, Mary seems not to have been always quite perfect before God. It is even remarkable that, save only that tender commendation of Mary to John by the dying Savior on the cross, the Scripture gives no instance in which the Ideal Son speaks either to or of his mother otherwise than with some accompanying implication of blame. It seems like a rebuke beforehand of that false regard for Mary which was destined afterward to reach the idolatrous excess of associating the Virgin Mother with the Divine Son himself—nay, sometimes of exalting her above the Son, in claim to human homage.

"And they understood not the saying which he spoke to them"—so Luke tells us, with reference to that question addressed to them by Jesus, "Did ye not know that it was needful for me to be in my Father's house?" To us, at the end of nineteen centuries of Christian history, lying luminous, to our backward-looking eyes, against the background of what we know Christ subsequently did, and said, and suffered, and was, it may seem, at first thought, strange that the parents of the youthful Jesus should have been at any loss to understand the purport of those words from their son. Had they forgotten the wonders in which he was born? Had they forgotten the solemn significance of the message brought them by the announcing angel? Had they forgotten what Simeon said, and Anna, in the temple? Not altogether, certainly. But imagine the everyday routine of commonplace through which their shut-in and laborious life was drawn out at Nazareth. Remember that other children were given them, as the years went by, to divide the parental care with Jesus. Consider that the preternatural character of this particular child of theirs was meantime probably suspended in a kind of abeyance and unconsciousness, necessary in order to proper preparation on his part in secret for the work which—but not before the fullness of his time was come—he should accomplish in the face of the world. Take all these things duly into account, and nothing assuredly will seem more likely, than that, in the course of such experience on the part of the parents, and of such divinely purposed, though, it may be, unconscious, hiding of himself, on the part of the son, the parents' impression of what had passed mysteriously so long before should have grown gradually somewhat obscure and dim to them; at least should have ceased to exercise a present and vivid influence on their habitual ways of regarding their boy.

The New Testament idyls of the birth, the infancy, the boyhood, of Jesus—they are beautiful, but do they answer to realities? Are they truth, or are they poetry? But there is a different alternative. Are they perhaps both truth and poetry? Both, let us confidently reply. These idyls are truth, and the truth which they are, is poetry. It would have been strange, indeed—nay, but it would have been *inadmissibly* strange—if such a life as that of Jesus, ending in such a death as his, then followed with such a resurrection, should *not* have begun with miracle. That, were it once supposed as true, would be an occasion of doubt and misgiving with regard to the alleged facts of all the after history. The miracle of the life, the character, the death, the resurrection, of Jesus may be said almost to require miracle preceding, attending, following, his birth; it may certainly be said to make such miracle in the highest degree probable.

But observe how little, after all, is the measure of the miracle that contented the divine requirement—how little, that is to say, additional to the one chief miracle of all, the miracle of God's becoming man. The *fact* of that miracle granted, the *method* of the miracle followed strictly as a matter of course. There was no other method even conceivable to men. But, *beyond* the miracle, confessed to be stupendous, of the divine incarnation itself, how marvelous the paucity of things marvelous in the narrative of the beginning of Christ's life on earth! There is no extravagance here, no ostentation, no excess. All is divinely moderate and restrained. And, besides the quantity of the demonstration, so limited, consider the quality of it—how exquisitely adapted, how simple, how beautiful! Human invention would not have satisfied itself so easily. Witness the bizarre extravagances of the parallel Buddhist legends. Witness the rejected, riotous mythologies of the apocryphal so-called "Gospels of the Infancy." *Those* are things such as the unchecked, unguided human imagination produces. The New Testament idyls are *history*. Thus only are explained their existence, their frugality in number, their moderation of tone, their simplicity, their fitness, their beauty, their indestructible, their invulnerable, life.

EIGHTEEN SILENT YEARS.

A blank page, or rather a page blank except for an inscription on it of these words only: "He was subject to them" [his parents] and, "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men," would be the fitting chapter in this history to cover the next eighteen years of the most memorable human life ever lived on earth. There exists in the record such a gap of absolute silence and mystery. This gap it is curious that the myth-makers seem never to have sought to fill up with their fictions. We have apocryphal "Gospels of the Infancy" of Jesus still extant, written no one knows exactly when. We have apocryphal "Acts" in abundance. But there have been, so far as the present writer knows, no attempts on the part of myth-makers to bridge over with the fabrications of fancy the historical chasm which yawns, vacant and mysterious, between the twelfth year of Jesus and his thirtieth. We suppose, indeed with probability, that Jesus learned and practiced the trade of his father, that of a worker in wood. We idealize about it, and say, "How faithfully, how fairly, with what industry, with what cheer, with what skill, that Perfect Man must have wrought!" Safe idealization, no doubt; but perhaps after all the most reverent way, and the wisest, the most wholesome, and in every respect the best, is to leave the entire interval as Scripture leaves it, impressively voiceless.

The few following extracts from the books of myth that were written early, some of them, perhaps, from seventeen hundred to eighteen hundred years ago, about Jesus the boy, may serve instructively to hint what sort of stories might have been produced concerning the youth of Jesus, had the imagination of man set itself to the work of supplying the void in history which marks the period referred to. These fictions need no comment. The contrast between

MAP OF PALESTINE

IN THE
TIME OF CHRIST.

SCALE OF MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40



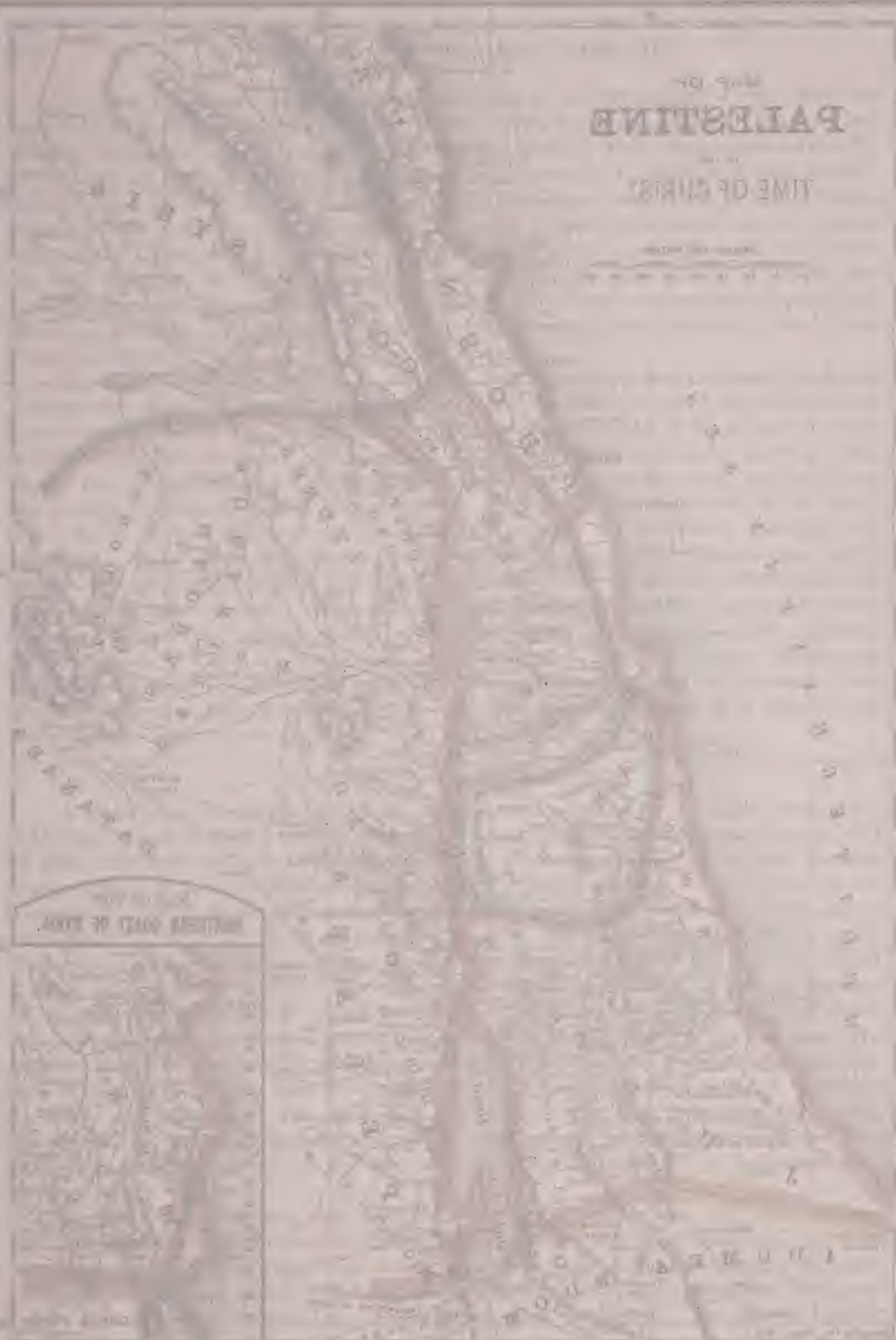
MAP OF THE NORTHERN COAST OF SYRIA.



Map of
PALESTINE

IN THE
TIME OF CHRIST

Scale of Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50



Map of
PALESTINE



them and the historical accounts of the New Testament, is in its bare self stronger than any rhetoric of remark could make it.

The so-called "First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ" expands the account furnished by Luke of the boy Jesus in the temple, into arid and idle extravagances like the following :

"When a certain astronomer, who was present, asked the Lord Jesus whether he had studied astronomy, the Lord Jesus replied, and told him the number of the spheres and heavenly bodies, as also their triangular, square, and sextile aspect; their progressive and retrograde motion; their size, and several prognostications; and other things, which the reason of man had never discovered.

"There was also among them a philosopher, well skilled in physic and natural philosophy, who asked the Lord Jesus whether he had studied physic. He replied, and explained to him physics and metaphysics, also those things which were above and below the power of nature; the powers also of the body, its humors and their effects; also the number of its members, and bones, veins, arteries, and nerves; the several constitutions of the body, hot and dry, cold and moist, and the tendencies of them; how the soul operated upon the body; what its various sensations and faculties were; the faculty of speaking, anger, desire; and lastly, the manner of its composition and dissolution; and other things, which the understanding of no creature had ever reached."

The same "Gospel of the Infancy," in an earlier chapter, has the following to tell about the part which the boy Jesus took in helping Joseph at his trade :

"And Joseph, wheresoever he went in the city, took the Lord Jesus with him, where he was sent for to work, to make gates, or milk-pails, or sieves, or boxes; the Lord Jesus was with him, wheresoever he went. And as often as Joseph had anything in his work to make longer or shorter, or wider or narrower, the Lord Jesus would stretch his hand towards it. And presently it became as Joseph would have it. So that he had no need to finish anything with his own hands, for he was not very skillful at his carpenter's trade."

"Thomas's Gospel of the Infancy" has the following: "When the child Jesus was five years of age, and there had been a shower of rain, which was now over, Jesus was playing with other Hebrew boys by a running stream; and the water, running over the banks, stood in little lakes; but the waters instantly became clear and useful again; he having smote them only by his word, they readily obeyed him. Then he took from the bank of the stream some soft clay, and formed out of it twelve sparrows; and there were other boys playing with him. But a certain Jew, seeing the things which he was doing, namely, his forming clay into the figures of sparrows on the sabbath day, went presently away, and told his father Joseph, and said, Behold, thy boy is playing by the river side, and has taken clay, and formed it into twelve sparrows, and profaneth the sabbath. Then Joseph came to the place where he was, and when he saw him, called to him, and said, Why doest thou that which it is not lawful to do on the sabbath day? Then Jesus, clapping together the palms of his hands, called to the sparrows, and said to them, Go, fly away; and while ye live remember me. So the sparrows fled away, making a noise."

Also the following: "Another time Jesus went forth into the street, and a boy, running by, rushed upon his shoulder; at which Jesus, being angry, said to him, Thou shalt go no farther. And he instantly fell down dead; which when some persons saw, they said, Where was this boy born, that everything which he says presently cometh to pass? Then the parents of the dead boy, going to Joseph, complained, saying, You are not fit to live with us in our city, having such a boy as that: either teach him that he bless, and not curse, or else depart hence with him, for he kills our children.

"Then Joseph, calling the boy Jesus by himself, instructed him, saying, Why doest thou such things to injure the people, so that they hate us and persecute us? But Jesus replied, I

know that what thou sayest is not of thyself, but for thy sake I will say nothing; but they who have said these things to thee, shall suffer everlasting punishment. And immediately they who had accused him became blind."

Who that wisely loves either truth or poetry would not prefer, to puerilities and blasphemies such as the foregoing, the eighteen silent years that the New Testament history of Jesus leaves us, stretched unbroken between the twelve-year-old boy's appearance in the temple and the going forth to be baptized by John of the young man of thirty, ready now for the self-sacrifice of his life and his death?

CHAPTER IV.

A VOICE.

THE Voice was that of Elizabeth's son, John, the cousin of Jesus. "John the Baptist" is the historic name by which he is known—"the Baptist" being a designation equivalent to "the Baptizer." Baptizing was the conspicuous visible feature of the work that he performed.

There is no other great active figure in history at once so distinct, so striking, so heroic, so noble, and, in the details of his character and career, so little known, as John the Baptist. We have the highest authority that ever uttered itself in human speech, for pronouncing this Hebrew prophet the peer of any man whatsoever that, up to his time, had arisen anywhere on earth in any age of the world. "Verily I say unto you," said Jesus, in that solemn form of asseveration which from those lips became so incomparably impressive, "among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." What other human being had ever, by name, a testimony to his comparative rank of greatness among his fellows, worthy to be once mentioned as parallel to that?

How suddenly this commanding human figure strides forth out of absolute obscurity into the broad blaze of publicity—a publicity as illuminating as ever yet shone briefly and brilliantly about any man in the whole course of history! "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," cries the Voice abruptly aloud; and, from end to end, as from side to side, the land rings again with the tones of the message. The aspect and habit of the crier accorded with the peremptory purport of the cry. His raiment was woven of camel's hair, and he wore a girdle of leather about his loins. He fed on locusts and wild honey. He made his haunt the uninhabited wilderness of Judea; and it was there that he lifted up his voice. "The voice of one crying in the wilderness," was his own description of himself, taken out of Isaiah the prophet. Out of the same prophet, John took also the words of the cry:

"Make ye ready the way of the Lord,
Make his paths straight."

The phrase was different, but the sense was the same as when the summons had its other form, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In the one case, it was the kingdom approaching; in the other, the King. The language is the language of one performing the part of a forerunner. Even yet in the East, important personages driving with some ceremony through the streets are preceded at a little interval by young men strikingly dressed who keep up, panting, but proud of their office, a rapid run in advance of the equipages of their masters, crying out, as they go, a shrill, ringing, imperious warning to everybody in the way to prepare a broad clear passage for the great ones coming. Such is the imagery under which John the Baptist is presented—under which he presents himself—as a "forerunner," announcing to

men the nearing advent of "the Lord." That Lord was Jesus—now about to take up his vocation as the promised, the long-expected, Messiah. But this, John himself did not yet seem exactly to know. Indeed, at times he seems almost literally a Voice, rather than an Intelligence, in respect to the message that he bore. The great heart that he was—great, self-postponing, self-effacing heart! Never a repining word out of his mouth! Never a syllable to imply that he felt it a hardship to be himself only a forerunner, while another than he was the one chosen to be the King. "There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." How willingly that "burning and shining light" paled away and lost itself in the splendor of the sun, which, as morning-star, he heralded! All praise and honor to John, the solemn, the joyful, self-effacer!

Such a Voice as he did not need to go to the multitude in order to be heard. The multitude came instead to him to hear. The wilderness was suddenly populous; for in the strong language of evangelist Matthew, "There went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan." It must have been a remarkable movement and concourse of people. They came to hear; they heard, and were baptized. The place of the baptizing was the river Jordan. Those baptized accompanied this, their act of obedience to the summons of John, with a confession of their sins. But among the thousands on thousands that thus thronged to the baptism of John, there came one offering himself for the rite who had no sins to confess. The stern Baptist was staggered. He did not afterward flinch before Herod the tetrarch; although in confronting that tyrant with bold denunciation of his sins and his crimes, he took the risk of going, as indeed he went, to prison and to death, for his fidelity. But before this comer to his baptism John was abashed. It was his own cousin that came, his cousin and junior; but he was abashed.

The new comer was from Galilee, from Nazareth. It was Jesus. The Baptist expostulated. "I have need to be baptized of thee," he said, "and comest thou to me?" Whether John had had previous personal acquaintance with Jesus, we have no means of knowing. As to what, if it be supposed that he had, was his previous impression concerning his kinsman, we are equally ignorant. It may be that now first, at this moment, so pregnant, was borne from above into the soul of the Baptist a sense divine of the extraordinary character and mission of his cousin. Some such sudden revelation perhaps it was, unlooked-for, surprising, that led him to utter his almost involuntary words of deprecation to Jesus. It must have awed the beholders, when they saw a man that awed everyone else, now himself thus awed in the presence of an applicant for his baptism. But with that meekness of majesty, that majesty of meekness, which characterized Jesus, he made his reassuring reply. "Suffer it now," he said; "for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." "Us"! It was not often that Jesus, in his recorded discourse, joined himself with any other man by saying "we," "our," "us." But he did so on the present occasion. It was a noble recognition of John, as joined in a kind of transcendent partnership with himself. John, having performed his needful act of self-postponing homage thus rendered as to his Lord, made no further pause or objection. His humility was the true humility of immediate obedience. He baptized Jesus in the stream of the Jordan. It was almost as if in prefiguration of the death that the one thus baptized should so soon accomplish at Jerusalem. "I have a baptism to be baptized with," Jesus solemnly said once, in prospect of his then imminent obedience unto death. The language was remarkable. It is not unlikely that, in being baptized by John, Jesus had some premonition in his soul of this symbolic and prophetic meaning hidden in the act. The act, so far as his own part in it was concerned, was at least, in speaking emblem, a whole dedication of himself to the work that he was to do.

Such an occurrence as this on earth could not pass without divine demonstration of some sort from heaven. That which in fact happened is very briefly, very unostentatiously, described.

It was august in its simplicity, its fitness, its sufficiency. The exact point at which it occurred was when Jesus, having been baptized, was coming up out of the water ; that is, when this great act of obedience and self-dedication on his part was freshly complete. The heavens were opened. This visible phenomenon was a striking part of the occurrence. Mark, the graphic evangelist, says, "rent asunder," instead of, more quietly, "opened." This suggests a rupture of the sky—a "kindly rupture," to use Milton's phrase applied by him to something far different, it must certainly have been ; while yet an act of parting visible and noticeable to a qualified observer.

"A qualified observer," let it be remarked ; for it seems not clear that anyone saw this phenomenon but Jesus himself. The statement of Matthew is that "the heavens were opened *unto him*, and he saw." He saw yet another phenomenon not less remarkable than the rupture of the sky. Mark says that "he saw the heavens rent asunder and," with that rending asunder of the heavens, the same sequel as the one also described by Matthew. Only Luke uses language which might imply that others than Jesus himself saw these extraordinary phenomena ; he says simply, in general terms, "the heaven was opened," adding, however, in description, the interesting point that Jesus was "praying" at the moment when these things took place. John, it should be noted, John the Evangelist, reports John the Baptist as saying afterward, "I have beheld." So that John at least, the baptizer, along with Jesus the baptized, saw what immediately succeeded the sublime celestial phenomenon of the sky opening over that unique baptismal scene. And this is what succeeded, told in the words of John the Baptist : "I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven ; and it abode upon him" [Jesus]. That heaven-descended dove, symbolic of the Spirit, was to be a sign from God to John, indicating that he on whom it alighted was the Coming One. It was, John says, for the purpose of making manifest to Israel the promised Messiah—"the Son of God," as John here calls him—that he himself came baptizing in water. He that should come after would baptize in the Holy Spirit instead.

But there was something more than has yet been described, in that amazing demonstration from heaven. The ear was appealed to, as well as the eye. A voice came out of the heavens : "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." Thus Mark and Luke report that audible voice from heaven ; in form as if it directly addressed Jesus himself. Matthew gives it a turn as if it were addressed to bystanders and observers ; or, as if it was intended for assurance to John, at least, not less than to Jesus. It is possible, indeed, that both forms of speech were used. But it seems more likely that here is an example in the Gospels of that freedom from rigid regard for non-essential details, which to wise readers of history always seems confirmatory, rather than destructive, of the substantial trustworthiness of parallel narratives.

The baptism of Jesus, constituting his solemn inauguration to the Messianic office, was now accomplished ; with the accompaniment of those awful and beautiful signs from heaven which have been described. At the same moment was mainly accomplished John's brief mission of forerunner to Jesus ; for the Messiah was now "made manifest to Israel." His earthly career would henceforth hasten to its tragic conclusion. But there remained to John a period of continued testimony on behalf of the manifested Messiah, followed by a moment of pathetic suspense and doubt. To Jesus, before the commencing of his public activity, there remained a period of mysterious trial.

THE TEMPTATION.

An event so momentous in the history of the world—of the moral universe, we may say—as the open induction into office, with attestation from heaven, of one solemnly undertaking to be champion of humanity, to be Redeemer of men, to be Destroyer of death and of him



BIDA.

CHRIST TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL.

that had the power of death, that is, the devil—this obviously could not fail to attract the attention and the presence of any adversary to the purpose in view who might at once have knowledge of the fact and be able to come and observe what happened in person. Such an adversary there was, and the name by which he is known is “the devil.” We need not doubt that the devil was present at the baptism of Jesus. The event took place on earth; but it was witnessed both from heaven and from hell.

The period of mysterious trial that after his baptism immediately followed to Jesus, presents one of the profoundest problems in the whole Gospel history. Read Matthew’s plain, brief statement of fact: “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.” No interval apparently elapsed between the baptism and this Spirit-led resort of Jesus to the wilderness. Mark uses his favorite adverb, and says that what is thus narrated happened “straightway.” At another point he varies slightly from Matthew, choosing a strangely vivid different word. He says, “The Spirit *driveth* him.”

If the statement of the evangelists were that the Spirit urged Jesus into the wilderness—this, and nothing more—it would seem easier to understand. Some wonder it still might occasion that the Messiah should thus begin his public ministry by hiding himself. But we should say, “Doubtless he retired for a season of lonely meditation, self-examination, and prayer.” If the statement were double instead of single, if it read that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, *and* the devil there tempted him, that again would be a less difficult problem than the one which actually confronts us. But he was led thither by the Spirit *for* the devil to tempt him. The problem could hardly be more difficult.

What is the meaning of the narrative? What was the purpose of the things narrated? We shall be in a better position for answering these questions when we have the whole of the narrative before us.

The experience of Jesus in the wilderness began with a long fast—a fast of forty days and forty nights. It used to be objected by skeptics that such a fast was impossible; that no man could live so long without food. We know now that men have lived even longer than that, without either food or drink. But in the case of Jesus, there is no reason for seeking to escape the supposition of miracle. In fact, it is expressly told us by both Matthew and Mark that, on this occasion, a miracle occurred; for the angels ministered unto him. It is safe to say that never, up to that time, had the angels performed their ministering office with equal delight. The word translated “ministered” is to be understood as implying that the angels brought food to the Lord.

The temptation from the devil that was suffered by Jesus *during* the forty days’ fast, is left unrelated, unhinted, by the evangelists. It is not expressly stated that Jesus, throughout this whole experience of his, was without human companionship. But such no doubt is the meaning. “He was with the wild beasts,” says Mark. That lonely wrestle with Satan, prolonged through forty days and forty nights of fasting! Was it also sleepless? What were the incidents of it? No one knows. Jesus seems not to have felt the need of food to sustain him. But at the end of the forty days—not till then—he hungered.

It was while he was in this state of conscious craving for food that the first *recorded* temptation from Satan befell him. “The tempter”—so Matthew here names the mysterious being alluded to, but Luke still calls him “the devil”—“came and said unto him.” This form of expression seems to imply that the presence and urgency of the devil intermitted at times. The tempter perhaps withdrew now and again to meditate some changed mode of assault. The first expedient was adapted to the perceived condition of Jesus. In what form the devil appeared, or whether in any visible form; with what voice he spoke, or whether with any audible voice, we are not informed, nor need we ask or conjecture. He “said”—that is, he intelligibly conveyed somehow to Jesus this meaning: “If thou art the Son of

God"—"Son of God," Satan had no doubt heard pronounced from heaven as the name of his adversary—"If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." The wilderness of Judea, a desolate region lying southeast of Jerusalem, abounds with loose stones. Many of these are flat, not unlike in shape the thin outrolled loaves in which the Syrians bake their bread. The suggestion was a not unnatural one. Those stones, by a mere miraculous word from the mouth of the Son of God, might be changed into loaves of bread. Not an instant's lodgment did the impious suggestion gain in the breast of Jesus. If miracle could sustain him through stones made bread, equally could miracle sustain him without the intervention of bread, however produced or provided. The reply was prompt, and it was drawn from Scripture: "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." This was equivalent to saying, "I do not depend on bread for life; I live directly from God."

The temptation was in effect a temptation to forsake God, by ceasing to trust him. Jesus was there in the wilderness not on his own errand, but on God's. He had put himself in God's hands, in the very act of going. In truth, he not so much *went*, as "was led." It was not time yet, it never would be time to Jesus, to take himself out of God's hands.

There was no use of discussing with one that could answer, and that would answer, like that; and Satan did not press his point. He tried a fresh expedient. He took Jesus away from the wilderness into the holy city, and there stationed him aloft on the pinnacle of the temple. Just what this station was, has been much questioned. We need not trouble ourselves to settle the point. It was a station of great height, perhaps looking down a sheer wall of rock masonry into the depths of Kedron valley below. Satan seems to have taken his cue for the particular temptation now proposed to Jesus from the spirit of the reply with which he himself had just been met and foiled. The tempter said to himself, "This enemy of mine makes a great point of *trust*. I will offer him a chance to exercise his favorite virtue. He loves Scripture, it seems; I will recommend my proposal with a text." "If thou art the Son of God," said he to Jesus, "fling thyself down from hence: for it is written, 'He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to guard thee': and, 'On their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.'" If this temptation succeeded, Jesus would commit the sin of presumption. And *any* sin whatsoever from him would answer the purpose of the tempter. For no one could be a Savior from sin who was himself a sinner. "Again it is written," said Jesus to Satan, "thou shalt not *tempt* the Lord thy God." This time, also, Satan tried no parley. Crestfallen he must have been; but he had one master stroke in reserve. He took Jesus with him to the summit of an "exceeding high mountain" and thence showed him in a moment of time all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. *How* Jesus was thus transported, what the "exceeding high mountain" was, what means were used for the world-wide panoramic display—the "show" may have been a *mere* show, or ocular illusion—whether the glory of the kingdoms was expatiated upon to the ear, as well as flashed in vision on the eye—these are questions that have much tempted conjecture; but we shall here pass them in silence.

The existence, the activity, the knowledge, the power, of a spiritual being such as the devil is represented in Scripture to be, may well stagger and confound us; but that there is a living and dreadful personal reality corresponding, cannot be doubted by anyone who is willing to understand the language of the Bible in its obviously intended meaning, and to accept its statements, thus understood, as true. With the reality of the devil of Scripture supposed, the present narrative becomes entirely credible—credible, observe, but by no means, therefore, at all the more comprehensible. Comprehensible to us, it probably never will be. But it is perfectly reasonable to say that, let the matter be wisely considered, the fact of a signal temptation to Jesus from the devil is far easier to believe than it would be to disbelieve it.

Granted the existence of a person like the devil, it follows, with the force of demonstration, that he certainly would summon all his power and all his craft, and this, in one concentrated, supreme exertion promptly put forth, against a recognized adversary like Jesus. Satan, we may be sure, waited only to be certain who his predestined adversary was, to attempt that adversary's overthrow. And perhaps the Holy Spirit resident in Jesus urged him into the wilderness, only in order that he might *there* endure his inevitable temptation from Satan — there, rather than elsewhere. It should be a duel, with no witnesses, no seconds, on either side; a long and deadly grapple joined between the two combatants *alone*.

The privilege and power of Satan were formidable, were tremendous. He seems to have been denied nothing in the way of what might be called outward or material resource. He could apparently do with Jesus what he would, only so as not to touch his soul within him in any way except in the way of proffered bribe and inducement. He has now rapt on high the alleged Son of God, the predicted Savior of men, to a mountain-top whence, through some optic effect not described, the kingdoms of the world with their glory are subject, or seem subject, to view. He dilates vauntingly on the spectacle, claims that all is his own to bestow, and dazzlingly offers to lavish all upon Jesus on a single condition — which he names. Now, we are likely to mistake. This is not to be regarded as a boastful offer of Satan's that he could not make good. It was not simple braggadocio on his part. The lie that was in the offer was not the open lie of an utterly false claim from Satan to power which he did not possess. It is mysteriously true that, in a certain sense, the lordship of the world was indeed his own. Jesus himself does not scruple to call Satan the "prince of this world." The lie in the tempter's words was a covered lie. It lay hidden in the suggestion, the implication, that *such* kingdom of the world as Satan could bestow, was *the* kingdom that Jesus came to win. The idea was a specious one. The alternative virtually presented to Jesus was — kingdom through suffering, shame, and death, after long delay (compare that notable expression in Scripture, "the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ"); or, kingdom at once, with no cost at all to himself. No cost *except* —

Except *what*? Why, only a form, a gesture, a posture. The soul need take no part in it. It was something purely outward. Jesus had merely to acknowledge the giver of the kingdom by an act befitting a loyal liege. He was but to fall down, in oriental obeisance, at the feet of the bestower. That was all. It was the work of an instant. A bow, a prostration, and the world at once was his — that world which he had come so painfully to win. "It hath been delivered unto me," so Satan not quite untruthfully asserted; "and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou, therefore, wilt worship before me, it shall all be thine." The tempter got his answer with no pause from the tempted. It came, like the previous answers, in terms of Scripture: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." But in this third case there was a preface. "Get thee hence, Satan," Jesus first said; as if now he inwardly felt sure, and was quite ready to announce, that the tempter had stretched the full length of his tether. Thereupon Satan withdrew, and Jesus was left alone once more. But not long alone; for behold, angels came and ministered unto him. Fitter companionship for this meek conqueror, than the "wild beasts" that had surrounded him before! Luke adds the mysterious clause, "for a season," to his statement that Satan departed from Jesus. Jesus, just before he suffered in the garden, said pregnantly, "The prince of this world cometh." The "season" during which he should enjoy exemption from the access of Satan was perhaps then, and not till then, concluded. To his announcement that Satan was coming, Jesus added the calm, confident words, "and hath nothing in me." Satan never had anything in Jesus. There was nothing ever in that holy breast that for an instant responded, even doubtfully, to the instigations of the devil. The "temptation," so-called, was wholly from without. It never got entrance — never so much as a hair's breadth of foothold or vantage-ground — on the threshold

of the Savior's mind. It was not, therefore, temptation, as we often understand temptation in reference to ourselves. It was simply a putting to proof. Satan did not, and he could not, induce Jesus to waver one instant uncertainly on a razor's edge of indecision between the right and the wrong. That would have been to Jesus failure and sin. To shake, to overthrow, the constancy of Jesus in goodness, was what Satan endeavored and hoped. What he succeeded in bringing to pass, was the furnishing to Jesus of supreme opportunity to show himself proof against the tempter's utmost efforts. It was, Luke says, "when the devil had completed every temptation" — that is, every resource at his command for putting his antagonist to the test — that he departed from Jesus, "for a season."

But we are not to infer that though there was no temptation to Jesus, in the sense of temptation responded to with some inclination on the part of the tempted to yield, there was, therefore, no struggle, no conflict, to the Son of God in the wilderness. A struggle, an agony, there was, and one indescribably dreadful; the more dreadful that the holiness of the tempted was such as to make hopeless the success of the tempter. The agony consisted in having to bear the nearness, the conscious contact, the permitted obtrusion, of the Evil One. The Holy One loathed the Evil One with inconceivable loathing; but he had to endure him — had to suffer his ways with him. It was only by actually overpowering him, in every permitted attempt of his upon himself, that Jesus could rid his hateful enemy away — such was the necessary condition of his office as Savior; and then the relief and riddance was but "for a season." It was perhaps the indelibly branded recollection of his own frightful experience in the wilderness which inspired to Jesus that petition given by him to his disciples, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One." There was a last pathetic echo of the same sentiment in the words of the Sufferer in the garden, then uttered when his "season" of reprieve was over from the visiting of Satan, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation."

The great Christian poet, Milton, thought the temptation a part important enough in the work of Jesus on earth to justify him in making that the sole subject of his poem, the "Paradise Regained" — as if paradise were regained for men by the mere successful resistance of our Champion to the efforts put forth by Satan to seduce him from perfect obedience. That is no doubt a view misleading by excess and disproportion. But the temptation of Jesus is in truth a topic of immeasurable moment. It is of the utmost consequence that we do not make the mistake of thinking vitally wrong about it. The narrative of it must have come, in the first instance, from the mouth of Jesus himself. No one else knew the facts of the history. Matthew gives us the fullest account of it all, and Matthew was an apostle. There was to him no motive for telling the story otherwise than exactly as he himself was told it. And, for any capital task like this narration, he was promised by Jesus every assistance he needed from that Spirit who should lead the apostles into all truth. The form, therefore, in which the narrative of Scripture exists, is doubtless approximately the same as that in which it issued first from the lips of the Lord. It is not necessary that we should completely understand the story; but it *is* of the highest importance that we should loyally believe it. Let us not seek to volatilize it away with ingenious explanation. It is far better not to explain, than to explain amiss.

The tempter was a real person — a person of indefinite knowledge, of indefinite cunning, of indefinite power. What he did consisted of real acts; what he "said" consisted of real suggestions intelligibly conveyed. Acts and sayings, both alike, were from without; that is, they did not originate within the mind, or within the imagination, of Jesus. They were not hallucinations; they were not impressions. They were realities of some sort; and realities not self-begotten on the part of Jesus himself. So much is certainly implied in the narrative; unless we explain the narrative in a manner to explain it away. As for the difficulties,

magnified or distorted into impossibilities, that the case involves—these, perhaps, are of our own creating. When we know more than we know now of that world which we call the world of matter, then, perhaps, we shall know what we do know—or think we know—very differently. Jesus once said a deep thing to certain men that raised cavils about what he taught. “Ye do err,” said he, “not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.” Let us not under-rate the power of God. And let us not be over sure that we know the Scriptures; we may, quite unawares, be explaining them amiss. It is safer sometimes simply to believe. We assuredly shall not share the victory which Jesus achieved, and achieved for us, over the devil, if we fail even to believe that he achieved such a victory. Our partnership with him in it must be a partnership of faith.

We know from Scripture that Jesus was put to proof at all points exactly as his human brethren are. And perhaps every form of temptation that can befall any child of Adam was fairly represented in the threefold test with which Satan was permitted to ply the Savior in the wilderness. Fleshly lust, spiritual pride, love of the world—what temptation to sin is there that does not appeal to one or other of these three principles in our sinful human nature? And these three principles are the ones desperately invoked by the tempter, in his three separate assaults upon the invulnerable virtue of the sinless Son of God. Because Jesus was thus assaulted, he can sympathize with us; because he was vainly thus assaulted, he can bring us effectual succor.

A GLIMPSE OF HIS GLORY.

Of what immediately followed the temptation in the wilderness, with the lovely sequel to that, of ministration from angels to the victorious but exhausted Son of Man, all that we know is comprised in a few statements furnished us by the Evangelist John alone. These constitute what we might very well call anecdotes. John’s anecdotes of Jesus belonging to this moment of his experience are not only charming in themselves, but highly significant. Still, we shall have to pass them here; merely making note of the fact that the purport of them all is to give the testimony borne by John the Baptist to the person and office of Jesus. It is very noteworthy that one saying of John, “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,” points unmistakably to the sacrificial or atoning character of the mission which Jesus was to accomplish on earth. It was the image of a suffering Savior, and not the image of an all-conquering Lord, that the pathetic symbol of the “Lamb” must have been intended by John, or by the Holy Spirit in John, to raise in the minds of his hearers. This same touching phrase in characterization of Jesus was, it seems, twice used—once on each of two successive days—by the great forerunner. The second time, at least, his testimony fell upon susceptible ears.

Two disciples of John the Baptist heard it, and they followed Jesus. One of the two was Andrew; the other, John the Evangelist does not name; but we may assume that it was John himself. Andrew brought his brother Simon to the Lord, who “looked upon him”—significant look no doubt it was, to have been thus noted—and recognized him. Not, apparently, as having known him before, but as supernaturally first knowing him now. Jesus even called the new comer by his name; adding the name of his father, John, or Jonah. He at the same time gave him a new name; it was that name by which he has come to be universally known, Peter, or Cephas. “Thou shalt be called Cephas;” a case of prophecy, remarkably fulfilling itself. “Cephas” (Aramaic) means “rock”; “Peter” is the Greek equivalent. The next day, Jesus “found” Philip, and said to him, “Follow me.” Philip was a fellow-townsmen of the brothers Andrew and Simon. Philip did to a friend of his, Nathanael by name, what Andrew the day before had done to his brother Simon—he brought

him to Jesus. Jesus repeated, in the case of Nathanael, the wonder of his immediate identification of Simon; with circumstance, in the latter case, to heighten the wonder. Nathanael, who had been very doubtful in coming—"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" he said in reply to Philip's invitation to come and see Jesus—was overwhelmed at once into reverent faith. "Rabbi," he solemnly exclaimed, "thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel." Five of his disciples—five whom Jesus would afterward make his apostles—were thus promptly drawn to the side of the Master; five, that is to say, if, as we may suppose, Nathanael was the one also named Bartholomew. These seem all to have come out of the ranks of the disciples of John.

The day following (or perhaps it was the third day after—the note of time in John is here a little doubtful)—Jesus had now reached Galilee, on his homeward way by Bethabara from the scene of his temptation in the wilderness—an extraordinary display of supernatural, indeed, of divine creative, power on the part of Jesus occurred. The manner of the display was as simple, as silent, as beautiful, as is that of the daily display of God's creative power in nature. The story, too, is told by John the Evangelist with an effortless ease, an unadorned simplicity, in majestic keeping with the character and manner of the incident itself. Everybody knows almost by heart John's idyl of the miracle at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. The evangelist was probably himself present; for with Jesus were bidden also his disciples to the feast. "And the mother of Jesus was there." One might almost be tempted to regret, for her own sake, that she was. But, long before John wrote his story, Mary had probably grown willing—more than willing—to let her own errors, whatever these were, appear to all men, in heightening illustration, by contrast, of the glory of her son and her Master. In not unnatural continuation of the mother's part to a child, Mary ventured on a prompting to Jesus which he thought not fit. What she said may have been a hint to the effect that now was a time for him to exert his miraculous power. Jesus rebuked and repelled her. Why? Not improbably he saw in her words to him something more than mere ill-timed indulgence in the maternal instinct and habit of suggestion to her son. That lovely, but imperfect, woman was perhaps a little over-ready to seem, in some sort, a confidant, a partner, at least by counsel, with the wonderful Being that she hoped her son would now presently show himself to all to be. Her friends should be reminded that she, Mary, enjoyed the mother's intimate privilege at the ear of this majestic man. "Perhaps," we say. We cannot know. But, for some sufficient reason, Jesus met his mother with a distinct rebuff. He made her understand that in the work of life for him now to be begun, he had no human partner—not even in his mother. If this passage between Mary and Jesus was an undertone aside, not overheard by any, then it must have been Mary herself who supplied the information respecting it to John. To suppose this would afford a grateful proof of self-abasing humility in Mary attained by her in later life. Was Mary's direction to the servants, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it," an expedient on her part to save herself a little in the eyes of observers under the humiliation which she had suffered? She was probably a special friend of the Cana household, as such known to the servants, and she may have meant only to prepare her son's way with them. But this poor human heart of ours! How many are its devices! Mary might, one would think, have assumed that he who could do what she apparently expected Jesus to do, was not less able than she was herself to procure the necessary obedience of the servants.

How did Jesus convert that water into wine? Of course, by introducing into it, in their just proportion, those elements which wine possesses and water does not. But whence did those elements come? And how were they introduced? Were they then and there created, by so much increasing the quantity of those elements existing in the universe? It is not necessary to suppose this. But could not he who, through visible means, collects the necessary elements from earth and from air and accomplishes this very miracle every year all over the world,

collect those elements from earth and from air and accomplish it, if he chose, for that one time at Cana of Galilee, without visible means? How idle our doubts and our questions! How much wiser to believe, whenever God speaks, than, in vain conceit of wisdom, to shake our heads and say, "Impossible!" At how many points are we liable to err, "not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God"!

John's concluding remark, "This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed," sufficiently indicates the object of this miracle. To supply the needed wine was but incidental. That was not the object, but only the occasion. The object was to manifest his glory, in order that his disciples might at once be confirmed in their faith in Jesus as Messiah—those five first disciples and perhaps no more. John, looking back through many years—probably fifty or sixty, at least, from the date of the occurrence to the date of the writing—saw the meaning of all more deeply and more truly than he could see it at the time. That deed of his Lord was now transfigured to John. It was, in the retrospect, as if at Cana that day the incarnate God had for the moment a little withdrawn the veil of humanity which hid his proper character, and let shine through, to a few favored eyes, the brightness of the Father's image which he was. It was a glimpse of his glory.

CHAPTER V.

FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM AND BACK.

AFTER the miracle at Cana, there occurred what at first blush looks like a removal on Mary's part of her family abode from Nazareth to Capernaum. On Mary's part, we need to say, rather than on Joseph's; for Joseph is not mentioned in connection with the removal, as also he was not mentioned in connection with the marriage at Cana. The probability is that Joseph had died, at some time not long before. Jesus is still reckoned as of the family; so that it was not yet true of him, as it came to be afterward, when he used those touching words concerning himself, that he had not where to lay his head. Perhaps, indeed, we should correct ourselves again and call it rather a removal on the part of Jesus, than of Mary; for as if he, in the character of eldest son, were now the recognized head of the household, the narrative reads: "He went down to Capernaum, he and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples; and there they abode not many days." The disciples were, for the time, joined to their Master. Of those disciples, two, John and James, were first cousins to Jesus; if, as seems probable, Salome, their mother, was sister to Mary. Perhaps they all, temporarily at least, composed one family. But "not many days," John says. This reads as if it were rather a visit, than a removal, that is spoken of. At any rate, the present sojourn of Jesus himself at Capernaum was comparatively brief. He will afterward make that city more permanently his place of residence. Meantime there will be a resort on his part to Jerusalem, and a return, for a short stay only, but memorable, to Nazareth, the home of his infancy, his boyhood, and his youth.

The visit of Jesus to Jerusalem was in observance of the passover. That visit was to become the occasion of a remarkable—one might almost be tempted to say, an uncharacteristic—demonstration on his part. Those certainly who find in Jesus nothing but gentleness and persuasion, must do so in forgetfulness of what he now did. It was an action on his part which only an inalienable dignity and elevation of character in him could save from seeming violent, to the degree almost of grotesqueness. Indeed, so astounding was his procedure on the present occasion, that mere dignity and elevation of character in the actor would only serve to emphasize its excess and eccentricity, if that dignity and elevation of character did not rise



JESUS DRIVING THE MONEY CHANGERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE.

BIDA.

to majesty distinctly more than human. What other great personage of history could be imagined entering single-handed a crowded place of public resort, as, for example, a great market, and, with a scourge of cords in his hand made by himself for weapon, driving forth a rout of sheep and oxen, pouring out in confusion heaps of coin belonging to money-changers and overturning their tables—what other great personage of history could be imagined behaving in this way, without our experiencing a sense of something derogated from his proper dignity? Eastern ways are, it is true, different from our ways; and we may easily make the mistake of judging this transaction by alien standards not applicable to the case. Whatever is really true as to the degree of eccentricity involved in the conduct of Jesus, it is noteworthy that he met with no active opposition, no challenge, no protest, in his proceeding. Not even was any question apparently raised, until after the fact. Then the Jews took heart of grace to inquire, “What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?” Jesus staggered them, scandalized them indeed, with his reply. His reply was, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews had an easy method of disposing of that sign—by simply indicating how impossible it was. The then existing temple was that known as Herod’s. Herod the Great had made it the chief monument of his long and magnificent reign. Besides uncounted treasure, he had lavished unstinted time upon its erection. “Forty and six years,” the Jews said, “was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?” They had misunderstood him, and they disbelieved. But they would no less have disbelieved, had they understood him right. And even in the sense which they mistakenly put upon his words, he could have made his words true. So that, however his reply might be taken by them, he did them no injustice by his parable. His disciples seem not to have understood him at the time. But they did not disbelieve. And afterward they understood him. The Jews did indeed violate and destroy the sanctuary of that human body belonging to the Lord; and in three days, as he said, he raised it up more glorious than it was before.

“Signs,” at the demand of unbelief, it was never the way of Jesus to supply. But during his present stay in Jerusalem, he seems to have given, on occasions not particularly described, many “signs,” in the form of what we ordinarily call miracles, in attestation of his office and mission as Messiah. He thus won disciples in considerable numbers. John, in making record of this, adds an affecting, a somewhat saddening, remark. Concerning those disciples (rather those “believers,” so-called), won to him by his “signs,” the evangelist says, “he did not trust himself to them.” This reserve on the part of Jesus had its source in his knowledge of men. He knew, John says, without being told by anyone, “what was in man.” And therefore he withheld his trust. *He* did not think it wise to stake himself on the inextinguishable nobleness innate in human hearts—even if they were the hearts of those who thought that they “believed on his name.”

It was during this passover sojourn of Jesus in Jerusalem, that there occurred the famous interview—an interview as famous probably as ever occurred between two persons—of Jesus with Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a distinguished man. He had the distinction of important office. He was a “ruler” of the Jews. He might have sent for Jesus to come to him, with hope of having his summons considered an honor by the summoned. But he did not do this. He came instead himself to Jesus. Was it a deference intended? Or was it from motives of self-regard? It is noted that his visit was by night. The natural, though not the necessary, supposition is that this was for the purpose of secrecy. Perhaps—nay, probably—the ruler did not wish his visit to be known. Still, it may have been only that he desired to have his interview quiet and uninterrupted. The opening of conversation, on Nicodemus’s part, was highly respectful, even reverent. It seemed to betoken something very like the full conviction of faith. “Rabbi,” said he, “we know that thou art a teacher sent from God, for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him.” Jesus will try his faith; will deepen



DAVID ROBERTS.

CANA.

it, will enlighten it, if it be real. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "The kingdom of God" is an expression evidently familiar to Nicodemus. The idea of it creates no difficulty for him. But that new birth—what does *that* mean? Manifestly not a second natural birth. Nicodemus virtually puts that interpretation out of the question, by his interrogatory reply. He is docile. It is as if he said, "I see that you cannot mean birth, in the ordinary sense of the word. What is the sense that I am to take?" Jesus was always ready to teach the teachable spirit. John's baptism was a topic in everybody's mind just then, and that baptism was in everybody's mind connected with the announced impending kingdom of God. John's baptism might be regarded as a birth of—that is, out of—water. For the baptized person issued from the water in very much the likeness of a birth. But such water-birth alone was not enough. There must accompany that, another birth. "Except," said Jesus, "a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Jesus had set forth in this teaching to Nicodemus his great fundamental doctrine of regeneration, and the necessity of it. Nicodemus's expression, "these signs," indicates that Jesus had speedily become conspicuous at Jerusalem as a worker of miracles. But John relates none of them. He does not write to gratify a taste for the marvelous.

After the passover, Jesus, attended by his disciples, makes an excursion into Judea. He there "baptized," it is said; which implies that he did a teacher's work and won followers who were willing to obey him. This Judean sojourn of his brought about one more attestation from John the Baptist to the Messianic character of Jesus. John himself was still pursuing his work. The two baptizers were near enough together for quick exchange of news between their respective disciples. John's disciples tell their master of the growing popularity of Jesus. But that great, generous heart was joyful to fade away in the new light, like the morning star before the rising sun. "He must increase, but I must decrease," said John, of Jesus in contrast with himself. It seems strange, but the forerunner and the King do not, so far as the record goes, appear ever to have met for any conversation, except on the one occasion of the baptism of Jesus.

The stay of the Lord in Judea extended only to the moment when he knew that the envious and hostile Pharisees had heard of his success, surpassing that of John, in winning disciples. He then with his disciples withdrew to Galilee.

Between Judea and Galilee lay Samaria. Strict Jews, going from one region to the other, would make a circuit rather than pass through this detested land. But Jesus took Samaria in his way. So doing, he reached the city of Sychar, now called Nablous, one day about noon. It was an historic spot. There was a well here called Jacob's well, as having belonged to that patriarch. The open shaft still exists, but it is now almost or quite without water. Tourists visit it in great numbers every year; and it is natural for them to wonder that the well should ever have been dug in a place where water much more easily obtainable was nigh at hand in full supply. The fact probably is, that Jacob, who was a man of peace, provided himself thus with water, at so much cost of labor and trouble, in order to avoid occasion of strife with some that laid prior, and perhaps exclusive, claim to the more convenient natural sources. Jesus was weary, and he sat down by the well to rest. A woman from the town came out, led apparently by some preference for this particular water, to supply herself from Jacob's well. Jesus accosted her and asked for a drink. The woman was surprised. She saw that the stranger was a Jew, and she had expected to be treated by him as Samaritans generally were treated by Jews—that is, with reserve at least, if not with scorn. She expressed her amazement. But she was destined to be more amazed. Jesus said: "If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him and he would have given thee living water." The disciples of Jesus, with the possible exception of John from whom we have this whole story, had gone into the city to buy food.



BIDA.

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

Like Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman showed readiness to learn. She divined a deep meaning in the stranger's words, and asked to have it brought out. Yet she asked, with some reserve of hesitation, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?" Her thought seemed to be, "Jacob was satisfied with the water of this well; hast thou something better to offer?" Jesus pointed out that the water of Jacob's well slaked thirst only for a time; whereas the water of which he spoke was a fountain in the spirit never failing and forever forestalling thirst. The woman was prompt to ask for this desirable water. Jesus seemed to put her off with his reply; but he in reality was preparing her to receive what he had to bestow. "Go, call thy husband, and come hither," he said. She answered shortly, "I have no husband." Jesus then showed her that he knew the facts of her history. These were remarkable enough. She had had five husbands; and she was living now an adulterous life with a man not her husband. She winced apparently to have the shameful truth exposed. She would change the subject. With complimentary recognition of a prophetic character in this stranger, she would set him talking on a controverted point, which doubtless he could treat at last with something like authority. "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet," the woman complaisantly said. "Now, our Samaritan fathers worshiped in this mountain. But you Jews hold that Jerusalem is the right place for worship." It was as if she had added: "I should like to hear thy views and reasons on this subject." The Samaritans were either a purely heathen, or else a mixed Israelitish and heathen, stock; if the latter, the fruit of an amalgamation that occurred as a result of the Babylonian Captivity, a remnant of Israel left behind in the land coalescing with a colony of Assyrians sent out to repeople the waste region of what had been known as Samaria. Hence the Samaritans, so called, of Jesus' time. They themselves claimed to be true children of Israel.

The woman's tactics did not succeed exactly to her mind; but her success was really far greater than she guessed. Jesus at first seemed to brush aside the question of difference between Jewish and Samaritan ideas, as a matter not worth discussing. "Woman," said he, "believe me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father." It was a solemn glance forward—of course not fully, if at all, understood by the woman—to the historic destruction, now already impending, of Jerusalem and the temple at Jerusalem, involving also, perhaps, the overthrow of the Samaritan worship. But the Lord will at the same time be faithful to the truth concerned. He stands squarely for the Jewish against the Samaritan claim. He says: "Ye worship that which ye know not; we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews." Still, the great general doctrine of worship independent of place and of form, the doctrine of pure spiritual worship, is what the Lord chiefly insists upon. The woman shows now more plainly the quality in her which made it seem fit to Jesus, who from the first had discovered it, to lavish so rich an instruction on so apparently unpromising an audience as was this poor sinful woman. A chord was touched in her soul that vibrated in response. "I know," said she, "that Messiah cometh; when he is come, he will declare unto us all things." Her ears were opened, her heart was ready, and Jesus delayed no longer to disclose himself. "I that speak unto thee am he," were his words in reply. At this moment his disciples came up. They had returned from their errand to the neighboring town, whither they had gone to buy bread. They wondered that their Master was talking with a woman; but something kept them from questioning either him or her. The woman was overwhelmed with sudden conviction. She forgot her thirst, or at least her need of provision against future thirst; for she left her waterpot and hastened away back into the city. There she excitedly cried out to everybody she met, so it would seem, "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did. Can this be the Christ?" There was an accent of truth in her words and her manner that won belief. A curious crowd began to stream forth from the town toward Jacob's well. The disciples meanwhile begged Jesus to eat. But he said: "I have meat to eat that ye know not." The disciples were perplexed for his

meaning. They asked one another, "Has anyone been bringing him food?" Jesus was aware of what they were wondering, and he said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." He added: "Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest?" This may indicate the season of the year when the incident at Jacob's well occurred, that is, late autumn or early winter; but perhaps, on the other hand, Christ's language was in the nature of a proverb. At any rate, pointing no doubt his disciples toward the streams of people approaching from the city, he said, in a striking metaphor, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest." The inhabitants of Sychar were in so far worthy that they begged Jesus to tarry among them; and he did so two days, with the result that many were brought to believe on him as "the Savior of the world."

Meantime Jesus having now got as far as Cana on his homeward way, was there met by a man who was a personage of consequence in Capernaum. It appears that the signs wrought by the Lord at Jerusalem had spread his fame far and wide throughout the whole land. The Galileans were many of them present in that city at the feast, and they, returning homeward, bore wherever they went the wonderful news of what Jesus had done in Jerusalem. It thus happened that this Capernaum gentleman, in a case of domestic distress that had befallen him, had faith that Jesus could relieve him. His son was at the point of death. Would not Jesus heal him? But Jesus, merging this applicant with the generality of his countrymen, said, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." The father simply answered, "Sir, come down ere my child die." That pathetic appeal was profession enough of faith. Jesus would not longer put off the piteous plea. But in answering it, he gave the faith of the father another chance, a harder one, to prove itself. Jesus did not start to come; he did not so much as say, I will come. Instead, he bade the father go his way, assuring him only that his son should live. The father was equal to the test. He believed; and, returning, was met on his way by messengers sent to relieve him of his anxiety with news that his son was getting well. The moment of the change for the better in the patient corresponded accurately, the grateful father found, with the moment of his receiving those reassuring words from Jesus.

From Cana home to Nazareth once more. But will Nazareth prove a worthy home to Jesus? "He came to his own and his own received him not." One may imagine that he who was Son of Man as well as Son of God returned from Jerusalem to Nazareth, "where he was brought up," with peculiar emotions. He had gone away an obscure youth, Joseph's son; he returned illustrious, with the fame of his many wonderful works done at Jerusalem surrounding and forerunning him. What would his townsfolk say? Would they recognize him in his new character? Would they welcome him as prophet, as Messiah?

He went on the sabbath day into the synagogue. This had been his custom, as everybody knew. To-day he stood up to read. Perhaps he had done the same thing before; he had never before done it in quite the same way. There was handed to him the manuscript roll containing the prophecy of Isaiah. He unrolled it and lighted upon a remarkable Scripture. It read: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." The effect was striking. It is noted that when, having rolled up the manuscript and handed it to the attendant, he took his seat, "the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him." There was, perhaps, obscurely felt to be some singular correspondence between the person and character of the reader and the terms of the prophetic description that he had read. The first sentence only is given of the discourse that followed. That sentence scarcely did more than put into words the thought that probably had already been half expressed by the aspect and action of the speaker as he read the verses from Isaiah. "To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears," said Jesus. That is, "Your ears have just heard the voice of the one prophesied

of by Isaiah as sent to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." The Nazarenes listened with wonder at the words they heard.

With wonder; and yet with unbelief. For Jesus so interprets their spirit. He says, in effect: "I know what you are thinking. You are thinking, Let Jesus do things here at home like what they say he has done in Capernaum. But no prophet is recognized and acknowledged by his own neighbors. Elijah, in the famine, was sent outside of Israel, full of widows as Israel was, to help a needy heathen widow. Elisha passed over the many lepers in Israel, to heal a single Syrian leper, Naaman." Those discriminations on God's part made in former times, it was of course his sovereign right to make, irrespective of individual desert. But the implication of Jesus is that, had their own countrymen been worthy, those prophets of old would not have been sent in preference to foreigners to dispense the favors of God. It was a hint from Jesus to his fellow Nazarenes. Would they take it? Would they burst out with believing and obedient acclamations of, "Nay, but we will show ourselves different from our unworthy fathers. We will accept our prophet. We hail thee now for what thou art, and what thou hast shown thyself to be." If, instead of murmuring their incredulous question, "Is not this Joseph's son?" they had, in grateful faith, like the Capernaum nobleman's, brought their sick to Jesus to be healed, there is no reason to think that Jesus would have denied them their desire. That nobleman had been tried virtually in the same way with them. Jesus had said to him, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will in no wise believe." If only the Nazarenes would bear the test as he did!

Alas, but no! The men who had just wondered at the words of grace from Jesus proved themselves now unequal to their opportunity. They were enraged at the idea of a discrimination against themselves made in favor of their rivals in Capernaum. It seems almost incredible, but it was quite in character for those inflammable Jews—they rose in mass; they hustled Jesus violently out of the synagogue; they hurried him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built—the exact spot, by the way, is not now easy to identify—with the murderous purpose of thence hurling him headlong down. That murderous purpose was mysteriously balked. There came a moment when the power of the mob, up to that point unresisted, seemingly irresistible, suddenly failed, failed utterly—no one could have told, or only One could have told, how, or why. Jesus, "passing through the midst of them, went his way." How majestically it is told! How majestically it was done! No antagonistic violence, no outcry, no demonstration of any sort. It was not escape. It was not elusion. No cloud enveloped him. He was not caught up and borne away. He simply passed through the midst of them and went on. Whither? Probably to Capernaum. For Matthew tells us that "leaving Nazareth he came and dwelt in Capernaum." That city will henceforth be more than any other place his home. Nazareth had missed to know the day of her visitation. She will be given one opportunity more. Will she prove worthier then?

AT CAPERNAUM AND THENCE ROUND ABOUT.

The contrast between Nazareth and Capernaum, in respect of welcome to Jesus, was great. And yet Capernaum—she too, with other cities like herself in being scenes of mighty miracle wrought by Christ—will in the end become the object of dreadful reprobation from his mouth, and of solemn prophecy, long since fulfilled, of dreadful doom. But meantime there succeeds a period of apparent prosperity to Jesus, in a round of preaching and beneficence accomplished by him from Capernaum as a center.

Four at least of those five disciples found by Jesus on his homeward way from the wilderness of temptation, were by vocation fishermen. These men, upon their return with Jesus from Judea to Galilee, seem to have gone back to their former, probably ancestral, employment with the fishing-net. Jesus now, walking by the lakeside, finds two of them there, with their



BIDA.

JESUS TEACHING IN A SHIP.

boats drawn up on shore. The Master was deeply engaged in speaking to the multitudes that thronged him as he went along. He asked Simon to let him occupy one of his boats as a standing-place — a sitting-place rather — from which to speak to the people. And would Simon Peter kindly put out a little into the lake, that he might the better command his audience gathered on the shore? Simon did so, and Jesus sitting there taught the listening throngs. It was a charming picture; but the seriousness of it made it something more, something other, something higher, than merely charming. The Lake Gennesaret, or Sea of Galilee, is a lovely sheet of water. The water itself is sparkingly clear, and, on one side, at intervals along the border, a pebbly and sandy beach slopes gently down to the water's edge; while across the breadth of the lake, about six miles in measure, is seen a range of high hills extending its whole length, and, when the rays of the sun fall right, seeming to beetle over upon the shadowed surface underneath. Behind you, as, standing on the high ground that rises a little way back from the margin of the lake, you face those opposite eastern hills, are swells of grassy upland retreating into the interior, and with their flocks and herds composing a pastoral landscape once no doubt as fair as the eye could desire to rest upon. The hum of population and the picturesque, lowly, flat-roofed houses, showing sheeny-white amid embowering green along the shore, enlivened the scene with that human interest without which the aspects of nature, however beautiful, soon cease to satisfy the social human heart. An idyl — such as too light-hearted romancers of the life of Jesus have sometimes painted it; an idyl, indeed, the scene and the history alike, save that a shadow of tragedy overcasts it all, reflected backward from the end that was to be, and so soon, in Gethsemane and on Calvary.

When that day's outdoor preaching was done, Jesus had a surprise for the brothers Simon and Andrew. "Put out into the deep," said he to Simon, "and let down your nets for a draught." Simon would do as he was bidden; but he deemed it right to assure Jesus that the prospect of success was poor. They had toiled all night, he said, with no catch whatever. Peter seems not to have delayed complying with his Master's word while he made this explanation; it would not have been strange, however, had the brothers been a little slack-handed at first in letting down their nets. If they indeed were so, they had immediate occasion to change their attitude both of mind and of body and brace themselves to the business in hand. For the finny inhabitants of the deep hastened with such an impetus into the nets spread for them that the weight and momentum were like to break the meshes. The astonished and now anxious brothers summoned to their help their partners in the other boat. Two boat-loads of fishes were the reward of that obedience on the part of Simon. The boats, indeed, almost foundered with their heavy lading. It was quite too much for Simon Peter, with his susceptible heart. He fell down at Jesus' feet and prayed a prayer which, happily for him who prayed it, Jesus did not answer literally. "Depart from me," cried Peter, beside himself; but *so* beside himself that his Master heard him for what he meant and not for what he said. Peter was overwhelmed into a sudden conviction of sin. "Depart from me," he exclaimed, "for I am a sinful man, O Lord." That was the uppermost thought of Peter's heart. And that confession made it impossible for the Lord to depart from him. No wonder Peter was "amazed." No wonder the amazement flooded over them all. James and John, their partners, were involved in it. And no wonder that at Jesus' bidding, they having first got their boats safely to land, the four men forsook all and followed Jesus. This second call to them meant abandonment of their former occupation. They were thenceforth to be otherwise employed. How employed, the Lord indicated, when, on this very occasion, he said to them, in his pithy, homely phrase, racy of the "sea," "I will make you fishers of men."

Jesus first went with his disciples into Capernaum. There he entered the synagogue and taught. Of course, it was the sabbath day. The hearers noticed how different was this man's tone in teaching from the tone of the scribes. The scribes quoted other men, they weighed

this opinion against that, they made fine distinctions, they hesitated, they left their hearers ultimately in doubt. Jesus taught with authority. He did not say perhaps. He said verily.

While he was thus teaching, a startling incident occurred in the synagogue. Jesus had a certain hearer there (certain hearers, possibly we should say), who knew him better than did the rest of those present. This hearer had secured for himself a lodgment in which he was invisible. It was lodgment within a human breast. A man had been seized, and forced against his will to give this alien hearer quarters inside himself. It was a hideous invasion and usurpation. For the invader and usurper was a demon from the abyss. Out burst on the ears of all a sudden and alarming cry. "What have we to do with thee," the words were, "thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God." The cry issued from the lips of the man that had been invaded and usurped by the demon. It was the demon's cry with the man's voice. It was a cry of panic and of agony. It was perhaps wrung from the demon, as it were against his own will, not less than against the will of the man. The nearness of Jesus may have compelled the demon thus to cry. Or perhaps it was a desperate device, on the demon's part, to discredit Jesus; attestation impudently rendered from such a quarter might well be supposed to discredit any person or any thing that was the object of it. At any rate, the attestation was unwelcome to Jesus. He bade the demon hold his peace and come out of the man. The poor victim of this possession was not relieved without first suffering pangs of deliverance. His evil inmate came out, but he tore his way out, at the same time uttering, still with the man's voice, demoniac yells. The people in the synagogue were amazed; as well they might be. "A new teaching!" they exclaimed. "With authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits and they obey him." The fame of what had happened went like the wind forth into every part of Galilee.

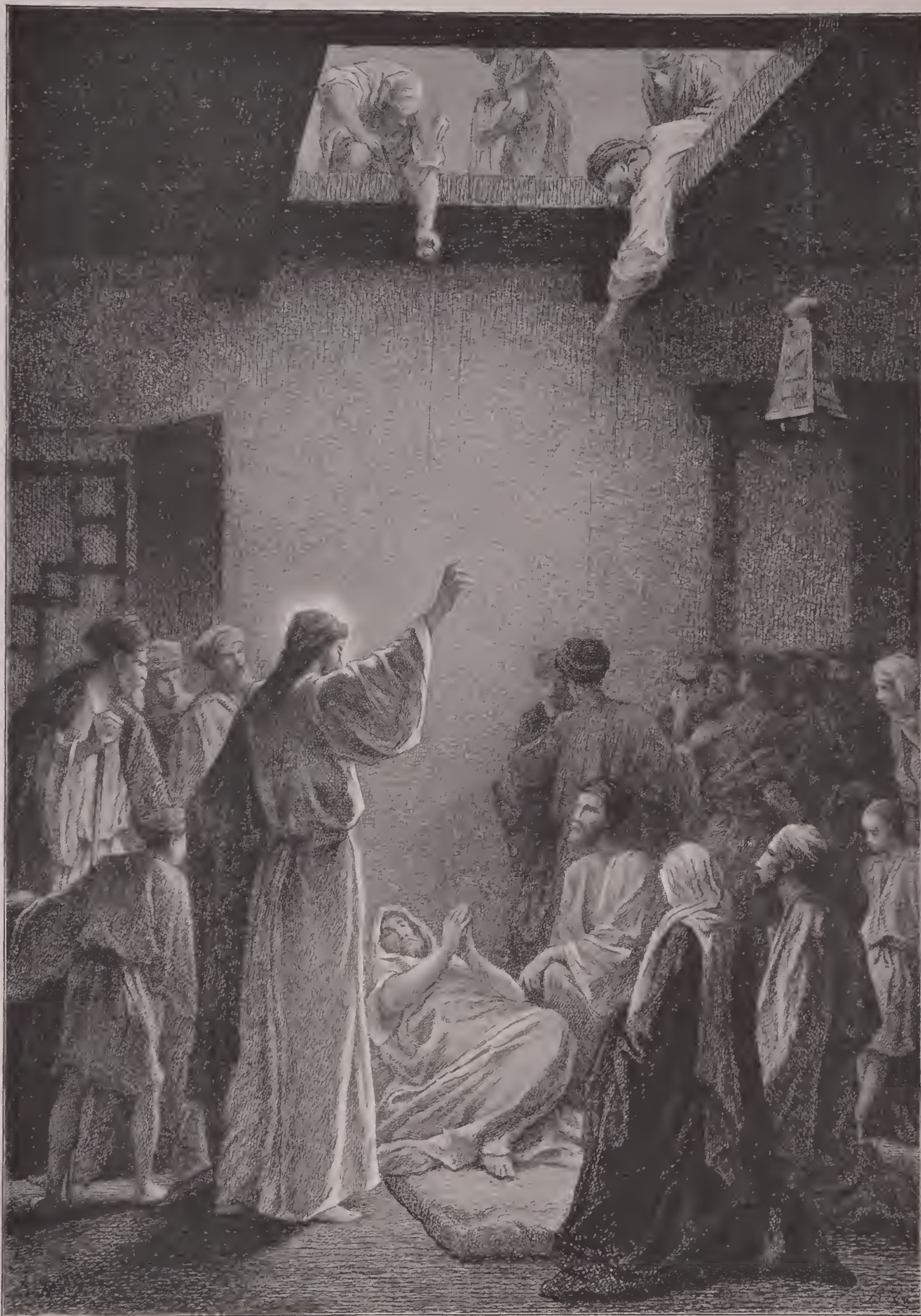
"Demoniac possession," as we have learned from Josephus to call this affection of the human soul, is a mystery. It is part of the mystery of evil and of sin. Not indeed primarily that it is so difficult to understand how an inhabitant from hell may, if permitted from on high, take up lodgment, along with the man himself, in a human bosom. That, to be sure, is difficult to understand. But equally difficult it is, when we think of it, to understand how *one* spirit (the man's own even) can be lodged within a body of flesh. Why not two spirits as easily as one? Nay, why not a legion? There is no more impossibility, no more difficulty, in the plural case than in the singular. We are familiar with the fact of one spirit lodged in the body. The Jews of Jesus' time were familiar with the fact — the occasional fact — of more than one. That is the simple truth. The difficulty involved is not the difficulty of understanding the mode of the fact. The real difficulty is all in understanding how God could permit the fact in any mode. But then how could God permit sin? There is nothing for us but to bow and say, It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good. Many other instances of encounter on the part of Jesus with demons in possession of men and women, occurred subsequently in the course of his career. It was natural that One whose mission in the world was to destroy the works of the devil, should be confronted by that adversary, not only in his own person, as in the wilderness, but also in the persons of his emissary demons, spawned upward into the world from the abyss. This consideration sufficiently accounts for the swarming incursions from hell into this mundane sphere of evil spirits, occurring at the time and in the place of Christ's advent and activity. The Apostle Paul warns us to be not ignorant of the devil's devices. And one of his favorite devices, one of the most successful and most dangerous of them all, is the device of what we may call a universal alibi — the trick, that is to say, of pretending not to be at all. That falsehood once imposed upon men, Satan can work with all freedom, as unsuspected.

Out of the synagogue into the house of his disciple Simon, was the next movement of the Lord. There lay a sick woman, the victim of a fever — an alarming fever. It was the mother

of Simon's wife. They interceded on her behalf with Jesus. Jesus "stood over her"—what a benediction was that leaning form!—and "rebuked the fever." So Luke, the physician, describes what Jesus did. The other evangelists say that he "touched" her hand; one, that he "raised her up," as if with his hand. They all say that the fever left her, and that she then "ministered unto them." "Unto him," Matthew says; which no doubt indicates that, as would be the natural instinct of love, of gratitude, and of reverence, she made her Healer the special object of her ministering attention. The sabbath evening drew on, and the house of Simon stood a siege such as no human dwelling ever stood before. People brought demoniacs to it in great numbers; they brought all the sick of Capernaum, a motley and miserable throng; in short, "the whole city," as Mark strongly states it, "was gathered together at the door." The sick he healed, not, as it seems, in masses, but with those blessed hands of his laid individually "on every one of them." "With a word," Matthew tells us, he cast out the demons from their robber-haunts in human bosoms. Those wretched, wicked beings cried out upon him, as they obeyed his irresistible word. They said, "Thou art the Son of God." Strange malice theirs, to testify thus to his true character! But Jesus forbade them; and for a reason that at first seems strange—it was that they knew him to be the Christ. He was not ready yet to be proclaimed abroad in his Messianic office; or, he did not wish to be *so* proclaimed. We know that the unbelieving Jews in fact charged it upon him that he cast out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. Perhaps such testimony to him as that which he this day forbade, was subtly meant by Satan to suggest collusion with himself on Jesus' part. It is to be noted that all this concourse of people desiring relief took place as the sun was setting. The sabbath then was ending, and, besides that, the fervors of the Syrian sun were overpast for the day.

The next morning Jesus rose very early, indeed before it was fairly day, and went out into the open air. He went alone, and he sought a solitary place. He there prayed. The extraordinary occurrences of the day preceding were, we may well suppose, not without extraordinary cost to the Son of God, who was also, let us bear ever in mind, the Son of Man. His puttings forth of virtue had in some sort exhausted him; and there was one way, one way only, of replenishment. He must pray. And did it not belong to his human nature to need a steady, a tranquilizing, a restoring, interval of contact through prayer with the great peace of God, after the perturbations, the agitations, of spirit which must have been the day before reflected upon himself from his own triumphantly successful exertions of power against the kingdom of evil? Simon and others had a reason for seeking the Lord in his retirement. The house it seems was besieged again, as it had been the previous evening. Indeed, not only Simon, with a few friends of his, but crowds of people surged like a tide of the sea into the place whither Jesus had retired. Most naturally the citizens of the town desired to keep Jesus in Capernaum. But his purpose was calm, and firm, and clear. He had put himself afresh into conscious communion with God, and he knew, from the highest source of knowledge, what it became him to do. He said, "I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent."

So from Capernaum Jesus went forth throughout all Galilee, teaching and preaching, casting out demons, and healing the sick. His fame swept the land like a conflagration that could not be stayed. He was obliged to cease visiting cities, so unmanageable grew the crowds; he went apart into uninhabited places. But the throngs found him out even there; such was the popular eagerness to hear him, and such the faith of the sick that he could heal them. The "teaching and preaching" seem to be first in the purpose of Jesus, the healing works second. So, also, the people, on their side, respond with appetite for hearing, not less marked—perhaps more marked—than their desire for physical good. Luke says, in an *order* of mention that deserves to be noted, "Great multitudes came together to hear and to be healed of their infirmities." Jesus, in speaking himself at this time of his mission, does not allude at all to his works



BIDA.

CHRIST HEALETH THE MAN AFFLICTED WITH Palsy.

of beneficence; but only to his teaching and preaching. It was spiritual good chiefly that he felt himself called to dispense; temporal good, only as incidental and tributary to that.

The incidents related by the evangelists of this tour of the Savior in Galilee, are all of them so interesting that it is difficult to omit any of them here. Returning, perhaps for an interval of needed repose, to Capernaum, he was yet again besieged in his house; this time by throngs of people more numerous apparently than ever before. "And he spoke the word unto them." One man was present that day whose case was peculiar. He was palsied. His friends brought him stretched on a bed. Alas, there was no chance for one so helpless and one needing so much room, to get even near the door. The crowd was impenetrable. But those four friends of his were not so easily beaten. They climbed with him to the roof of the house (perhaps reaching it by a passage from roof to roof of neighboring houses closely adjoined), and, making for themselves a kind of trap door in that, they let down the poor palsied man on his bed into the midst before Jesus. It was an eloquent, an irresistible, appeal of faith. It is not expressly said that the sick man's errand was to be healed. We are permitted to suppose that his chief motive may have been a spiritual one, to hear the word of God. This would account for the unexpected, the extraordinary, way in which Jesus met him. Jesus said, "Son, thy sins are forgiven." Consider what must have been the sense on Jesus' part of transcendent superiority in himself, to justify or to prompt that young Galilean's addressing a man very probably his own senior in age by the affectionate word, "Son"! True, it is explained by the evangelists that the Savior was thus graciously inclined as "seeing their faith." There was faith then on the part of those who brought the sick man, as well as faith on the part of the sick man himself. But the blessing was to him, and it was the spiritual blessing of forgiveness for his sins. Of course, there must have been discerned by Jesus in the man a fitness to receive this blessing.

But the spirit excited in certain observers present was one of criticism rather than of sympathy. Those observers were scribes and Pharisees. Some of them had come from far; some even from as far as Jerusalem. They were probably official observers—spies and informers, in fact. They perhaps said nothing, they perhaps guarded even their looks; but Jesus saw what was going on in their hearts. "Why doth this man thus speak?" they were saying to themselves; "he blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins but God alone?" "Why reason ye these things in your hearts?" Jesus said to them, with a sureness of aim which must have filled them with surprise. Jesus had a method ready of meeting their cavils. "Which is easier," he asked, "to say to a man sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or, to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?" In the immediate presence of a man imprisoned, as that man was, in a body to all purposes of voluntary motion dead, the question had the force of demonstration. Whoever could release that man's body from the bonds of palsy, could release that man's soul from the bonds of sin. Now, it is not told that the palsied man expected or sought any blessing beyond that which he had already received. But he must have listened to that question from Jesus with a strange agitation of hope. Was he to be healed as well as forgiven? Healed in body, as he had been healed in soul? He had not long to wait in pleased suspense. He heard further sounds that shot through his withered members a long-forgotten thrill of life. They were these words from the lips of Jesus: "Arise,"—the sick man, of course, knew that the words were spoken to him—"Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house." The obedience was as swift as had been the bidding. However much the poor delighted man may have wished to linger in the presence of his Savior, he had no impulse but to do as he was told. He rose, he took up his bed, which, perhaps, consisted of little more than a blanket or two, and walked out before them all. There had been difficulty of ingress for him, but there would be no difficulty of egress for a man healed as that man had been. Awe on the part of all would open the way before him through the press. "So from amid them



THE CALLING OF MATTHEW.

forth he passed." He went, "glorifying God." One would like to have heard his exclamations of joy and thanksgiving as he walked along! Amazement took hold of all that were there; amazement mingled with fear. "We have seen strange things to-day," they said.

One more incident, an important one, and our story of this little section of the Savior's brief laborious life is done. Jesus again walking by the lake, again drew about him crowds of eager listeners to his discourse. He seems to have talked as he walked. Thus walking and talking, he passed by a place where taxes were paid. A "receipt of custom," our old familiar Bible calls it. Here sat a man whose business was that of a tax-gatherer; or of a "publican," as the Bible otherwise names it. Very unpopular the followers of this business naturally were, especially if they were Jews. They then seemed to be renegades, as well as oppressors, wringing from their own brethren taxes for those brethren's foreign masters. Of this peculiarly odious class was the man now in question. Matthew his name was, but he was also called Levi. Jesus would almost seem to have taken delight in surprising men, in scandalizing them, in acting directly in the teeth of their natural expectations. He now said to publican Matthew, "Follow me!" So far as from the narrative itself appears, this was in no special way prepared for. Nothing more is reported as said by Jesus than just the two words, "Follow me." Matthew, on his part, is not recorded to have made any reply in words. From such silence, however, in the narrative, it is not to be with confidence inferred that the interview between Jesus and Matthew was as abrupt and as brief as in the Gospel account it appears. Matthew's place of residence and employment was where he could hardly have failed to become familiar with the claims and the teaching of Jesus. He was already, perhaps, when he received this decisive call, an undeclared disciple of the Lord. At any rate, now he arose, forsook all, and followed him.

The incident of the calling of Matthew drew after it a sequel. Matthew made his Master a great feast in his house. It is a curious fashion in the East for the general uninvited public to enjoy the freedom of being present on such festival occasions, as interested spectators, although not partakers, of the cheer. But at this banquet, besides the multitude of such made up from classes of persons not in high social esteem, there were many invited guests too that Jews of condition would look down upon as "publicans and sinners." Jesus' presence in such a company was a fresh scandal to the critical scribes and Pharisees. "Your Master eats with publicans and sinners," they murmured to his disciples. Jesus himself answered on behalf of his disciples, in those memorable words of his: "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." If we are right in placing, as we do, the visit to Jerusalem mentioned in the beginning of the following chapter, the arduous and eventful first great preaching tour of Jesus in Galilee was interrupted by that episode.

CHAPTER VI.

AT JERUSALEM AGAIN.

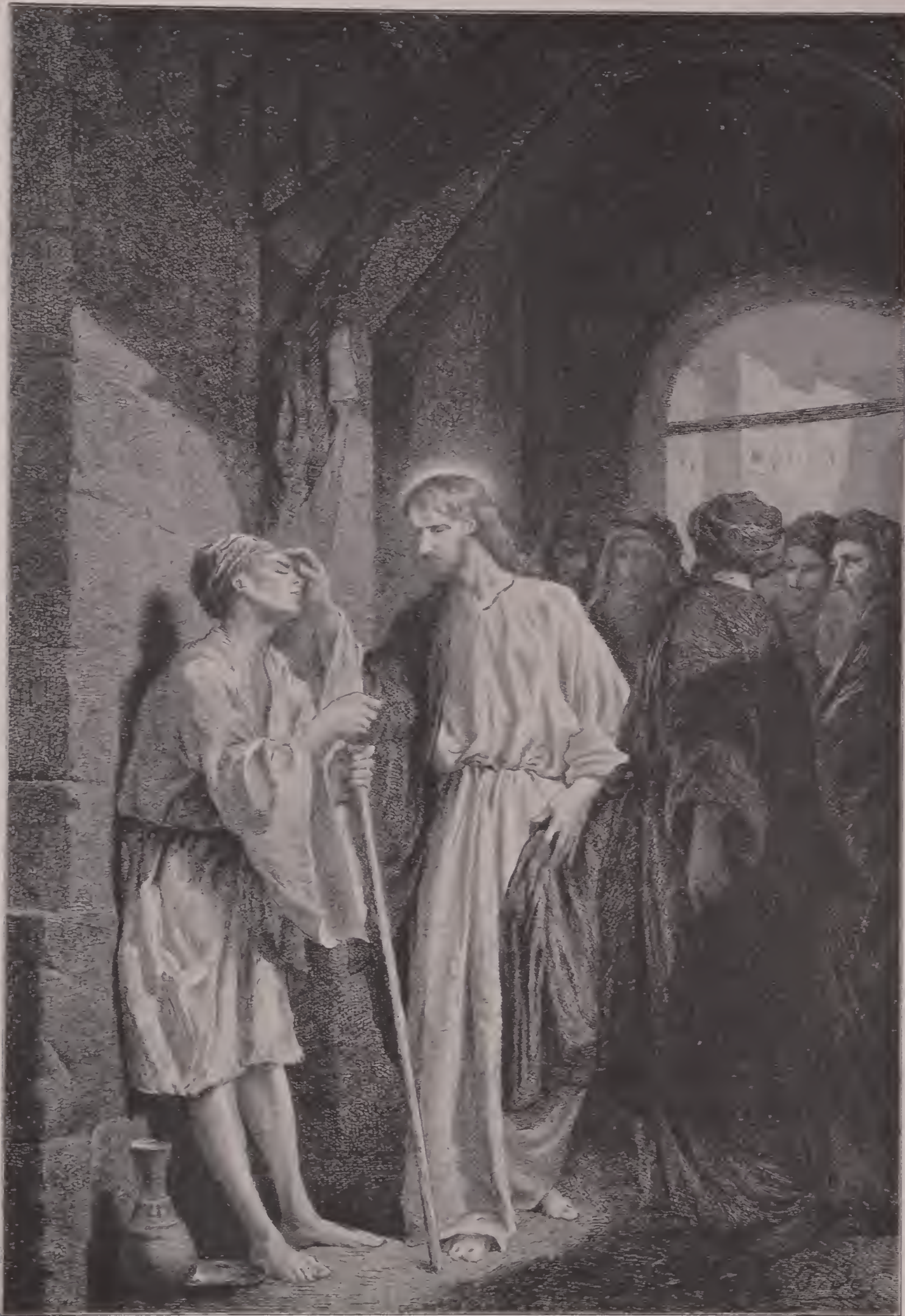
IT is right to say that some good authorities place quite differently this visit of the Lord to Jerusalem. The time of it cannot be fixed with certainty. A feast drew him thither. What feast? No one knows. Some make it the feast of Purim. This feast was a joyous one; not religious, as were most of the other feasts of the Jews; a feast kept in commemoration of the great national deliverance from utter extinction, experienced in the time of Esther. Other careful students think the feast was a passover. The choice perhaps lies between these two views; though arguments are adduced in favor of several other feasts. John alone among the evangelists makes distinct mention of this visit of Jesus to Jerusalem. He mentions it for the sake of reporting one incident in particular by which it was marked, interesting and significant in itself, but more memorable still as giving occasion to certain sayings of Jesus to be ranked among the profoundest and most characteristic that ever fell from his lips. The incident now referred to is the following:

One of the pools or reservoirs of water with which Jerusalem abounded, perhaps beyond any other city ancient or modern in the world, bore the musical name of Bethesda. This pool seems to have been covered with a pavilion; at least, it is said to have had five porches—structures here probably to be conceived of as belonging to an edifice in the nature of a pavilion—erected over the pool for shelter to those visiting it against the heat and light of the sun. In these porches lay a multitude of persons sick, blind, halt, withered. Anyone who has visited an Eastern country can easily imagine the distressful scene. Among the sufferers there was one man in a case peculiarly pitiable. His infirmity was one of thirty-eight years' standing. Jesus saw him lying there helpless and hopeless, and he had pity on him. "Wouldst thou be made whole?" said he. "Sir," the man replied, "I have no one to help me down into the water at the right moment. I start when the water begins to stir, but someone else quicker than I always steps in before me." The pool may have been fed from a spring subject to intermittent agitations from interior causes, like, for example, the escape of gas of some sort generated underneath. The explanation given in our old Bible to the effect that an angel came down at intervals to trouble the pool, is now considered by all good scholars to be an interpolation in the text; something, that is to say, not belonging to the Gospel as John wrote it. The sick man shows no sign of expecting any help from Jesus. He does not even manifest curiosity. Much less does he exhibit faith. But Jesus, with apparent abruptness, says to him, "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." Healing followed instantly, and, upon healing, obedience; for he took up his bed and walked. He will presently be given a chance to show whether or not he had that best kind of faith, the faith that will feel neither fear nor shame in consequence of having obeyed.

It was the sabbath when the incident took place. And the incident had a sequel. For the Jews saw the man carrying his bed, and they challenged him. "Thou art breaking the sabbath," they said. The man answered them, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk." Fairly good warrant for his behavior, one would say. But the Jews seemed not to think so. Their next question was not, "Who healed thee?" but, "Who is the man that told thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?" The man could not tell, for he did not know. He had obeyed without knowing whom. And Jesus meantime had passed out of his sight among the thronging multitude. Afterward, the same day probably, Jesus found the man—not, "was found by the man"—in the temple. There Jesus spoke to him. "Behold," said he, "thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee."

Whether this imported that the man's disease was due to some sinful indulgence on his part, we cannot know, and it is idle to conjecture. The man somehow learned now that his healer was none other than the celebrated Jesus of Nazareth. He went and told "the Jews"; by this expression of John's we are here, as elsewhere generally, to understand the Jewish rulers. He perhaps felt pleased at the distinction of being healed by the man that at the moment was everywhere talked about. In his simplicity, he may have supposed that the Jews would themselves now be won over. On the contrary, they assailed Jesus bitterly. They were offended because he did these things on the sabbath day. But Jesus answered them to their yet greater offense, "My Father worketh," he said, "even until now, and I work." August and awful association of himself with God! It would either overawe the Jews, or it would incense them. It incensed them. They were mad against him, even to the point of murder. He not only broke the sabbath, but he called God in a peculiar sense "his own" Father, making himself equal with God. Why should this claim on Jesus' part have been such a mortal offense to the ruling Jews? The offense of it lay in its threatening to be so profoundly and so widely acknowledged by the people. Jesus was breaking down their own—the rulers'—authority. He was carrying away the nation from themselves. What he was gaining they were losing. He was in the way of becoming popularly accepted for what he claimed to be. Should that come to pass, there would be an immediate end of their own influence and high consideration in the Jewish world. It was, as we know from the express statement of John, this spirit of "envy" in them that led finally to the arrest, condemnation, and crucifixion of Jesus.

It is a special feature—indeed a characteristic feature—of John's narrative that it incorporates somewhat more at large than do those of the other evangelists difficult discourses of Jesus, together with certain passages of sustained controversy arising between himself and the unbelieving Jews. On the present occasion, the Lord exasperates his enemies by putting forth claims for himself that grow more, rather than less, in degree as they are challenged and rejected. "You plot against me," he in effect says, "because I healed a man on the sabbath. That was an exercise of power on my part very insignificant in comparison with what I shall yet effect. I have healed with a word." He added: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." Then, as if he saw rejection written on the faces before him of his enemies, he spoke to that spirit in their hearts: "Marvel not at this; for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgment." The higher towered the wrath of his hearers, the more this speaker supplied his hearers to be occasion to them of wrath. He refers to the deputation of inquiry concerning John the Baptist that they had sent to John the Baptist himself: "Ye have sent unto John and he hath borne witness unto the truth. But the witness which I receive is not from man." Then, for one moment the stern judicial tone relaxes and relents. "I say these things," he tenderly assures them, "that ye may be saved. He [John] was the lamp that burneth and shineth; and ye were willing to rejoice for a season in his light. But the witness which I have [the credentials which I bring] is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me." It is sometimes said nowadays, even by Christian teachers, that miracles, so-called, are a burden to Christianity. The Founder of Christianity, at least, did not, in his days, so regard them. To his own wonderful works (that is, "miracles")—his wonderful works, observe, not his wonderful words—Jesus here makes confident appeal as sufficing proof of his own divine mission. As evidence, miracles may no longer be necessary; but as historic facts they are not to be explained away. There was something, apparently, in his hearers' demonstrative expression of countenance that indicated their obstinate unbelief. Jesus resumes a grieved, and



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THE MAN BLIND FROM BIRTH.

at length an indignant and denouncing, tone. "Ye will not come to me," he said, "that ye may have life. . . . I know you that you have not the love of God in yourselves. . . . How can ye believe?" The breach was final and complete between the ruling Jews and Jesus. For the time at least, Jesus will now presently shake off the dust of his feet against rejecting Jerusalem, and return to Galilee.

One or two striking incidents, however, related by the three other evangelists, and not by John, belong perhaps to this part of the history. It was the sabbath day again, and Jesus, with his disciples, was walking through the fields of ripening wheat. (This we may suppose to have been at some point on the return way from Jerusalem to Galilee; or it may have been near Capernaum, after the arrival there.) There would naturally, according to the usage of the country, be here and there trodden paths never broken up by the plow, traversing such fields. These paths would, by immemorial prescription, be open and free to the public. The disciples, being hungry, plucked off ears of wheat, and with their hands rubbing them free of their husks, ate the grain as they went along. This also would be quite in accordance with the manners of the country. No one would criticise such a proceeding as in itself unlawful or improper. But that it should be done on the sabbath day—that, the Pharisees complained of. Jesus answered them with instances out of Scripture. Did not David once in a case of need eat the shewbread, David with his companions? And do not the priests in the temple profane the sabbath without blame? "But I say unto you, that one greater than the temple is here. . . . The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath; so that the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath." This language of high assumption on the part of Jesus, instead of abolishing the sabbath, ordains the sabbath anew. It is not a national, it is not a temporary, institution. It was made for man. As long as man exists the sabbath exists for him. But he who made the sabbath—not, be it observed, he for whom the sabbath was made—is lord even of so sacred, so inviolable, a thing as that.

Yet another sabbath day, and now a synagogue scene once more—most likely in Capernaum, at which place Jesus, we may assume, had now at least arrived. Jesus was teaching. A man sat before him whose right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees were in waiting, not to hear the word of God, but to see whether Jesus would break the sabbath again. They were watchfully making up an indictment against him. Jesus knew their thoughts, and he treated them accordingly—after his manner. That manner was never to conciliate an obdurate enemy of the truth. Nothing was more invariable with Jesus than to meet opposition in a way to inflame it rather than to placate it. Of course, his *object* was not to produce this result. His object was simply to bear witness to the truth. If his hearers were of the truth, they would hear his voice. It was always within their choice to resist or to yield. But at all events *he* must abide faithful. He could not deny himself. He would not, he could not, abate one jot or tittle of his claim. On the present occasion, he furnished his enemies what they wanted, which was matter of accusation against him. He did this, and he did more. He accompanied his action with words addressed to them that additionally excited their anger. But first to the man with his right hand withered, he said: "Rise up, and stand forth in the midst." This man also had, so far as may be learned from the record, done nothing, said nothing, to exhibit faith, or to indicate even a thought on his part of being healed. But he was ready to obey, and he obeyed. He rose and stood forth in the midst. There he was, in plain sight of all. What was done should be done openly—no chance of doubt or gainsaying. One can imagine the hush of expectancy, the tension of eyes to see all that might happen. The man thus standing, all eyes vibrating to and fro between him and the Master, Jesus speaks; but it is not to the man. It is to "them," that is, to the spies and informers present there. He says: "I ask you, Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good or to do harm?" This was a retort, a telling one. The Jews had asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?"



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JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES IN THE CORNFIELD.

Jesus will transfix them with a perfectly just, but to them a fatal, alternative. He in effect asks: "Which of us, you or I, can more fairly be charged with now breaking the sabbath? You are plotting to destroy my life. I, you think, am on the point of making this man's life more complete. Tell me, which is lawful on the sabbath day, to save a life or to destroy it?" It must have been a trying moment for those convicted—self-convicted—hypocrites and murderers; a moment made more trying by being prolonged. For Jesus paused—a pause with weight in it like the weight of a millstone. The pause was still more oppressive by virtue of the gesture of Jesus. Jesus "looked round about on them all." That look! Mark says he looked "with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their hearts." Then he said to the man in his helpless, but no doubt awed, as obedient, suspense, "Stretch forth thy hand!" A yet harder test of his faith! Will he obey? For can he? He can, for he will. His hand was withered, but he "stretched it forth, and behold it was restored whole as the other." Nothing is told us of the subsequent behavior of the man. He is not the center of the present narrative interest. That center consists of the enemies of Jesus. They, alas, instead of being willingly convinced and ashamed, "were filled with madness." They consulted one with another what they might do to Jesus. But Jesus' hour has not yet come for suffering the extreme of outrage at their hands.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

OF course much that is of great interest in the material existing for the present biography, must here, for want of space, be passed over with very inadequate notice. Our Gospel records seem themselves to break down under the impossible weight of all that they have to tell concerning this part of the life of Jesus. Before giving, as they do, a few illustrative incidents, they mass the Lord's present activities together in the suggestive general statement that he "went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people."

But the distressed did not wait for him to find them where they were, nor even for him to come into their neighborhood. His fame went everywhere throughout Syria, and from everywhere were brought to him the sick to be healed, and the variously afflicted to be relieved. Not only from Palestine itself, but from beyond the limits of Palestine, they came. It was as it were an upheaval and a setting in motion of the whole population. From Judea, from Jerusalem, from Idumea, from beyond Jordan, from the regions of Tyre and Sidon, the concourse flowed, like a tide of the sea, about Jesus' feet. He was overwhelmed with the rising and swelling surge of popular importunity. Some expedient had to be adopted to ease the actual bodily pressure of people upon his person. He had a "little boat" provided—we may suppose it a boat too small to hold any but himself and one or two helpers who should manage it—for his own special accommodation. The eagerness of sufferers to come into physical contact with him, to "touch" his person, forced him to this. Jesus was experiencing the inconvenience of fame, and especially of his peculiar kind of fame. His popularity was premature, was excessive. He deprecated it. It might hasten on the inevitable catastrophe too soon. So he insisted strongly that those who were healed should forbear to make him further known. The unclean spirits he charged—he charged them "much"—to abstain from proclaiming his true character.

Not far withdrawn from the margin of the Lake Gennesaret, there rises gently to some height a hill, conjectured only, but with much probability, to have been in Jesus' time the scene of quite the most famous, the most fruitful, the most influential, historic occasion of



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THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

public discourse that ever occurred in the annals of mankind. The discourse referred to has acquired a name from the nature of the place where it was delivered. It is called the "Sermon on the Mount." The hill on which it was pronounced has itself reciprocally received a name from association with the sermon. The opening sentences of that sermon all of them begin with the word "Blessed," which in Latin is "*Beati*." From this circumstance, the unidentified hill is often spoken of as the "Mount of the Beatitudes." To this hill, Jesus, at about the time which we have now reached in his history, retired, probably at the close of a laborious day, for a season of solitary prayer. The season prolonged itself till it had outlasted the night. There was reason. Jesus was about to take a step that would vitally affect the fortune of his cause; and this not only for the immediate future, but for all time to come. Such a crisis demanded special preparation on his part, an interval of isolation from the world, with profound abandonment of himself in communion with his Heavenly Father. There must be a nightlong vigil of prayer.

With the dawning of the day, he called together his disciples and out of their number chose twelve, to be thenceforth in peculiar relation to himself, whom he styled distinctively, "apostles." The names of those twelve obscure men became, by that simple outdoor act of oral appointment, not even recorded at the time—some of them by that act alone, for nothing further is known of them—dedicated to universal and immortal renown. They were Simon Peter and Andrew his brother, James and John, also brothers, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, another James (son of Alphaeus), another Simon, called also Zelotes (or the Zealot), two Judases, one, son of James, the other, Iscariot. To this last name on the roll, is always added the sad clause, "who also betrayed him." The list thus given is that of Luke. Matthew and Mark give the same list, in the same order, with use, however, in some cases, of alternative individual names.

Jesus, after this solemn setting apart of the twelve apostles, seems to have descended from the summit of the mount to a lower level, or terrace, on its slope, there seating himself for an address to the people in general, who surrounded him in great numbers. The discourse which he pronounced is so familiar to all, that it would be superfluous to make anything like a full report of it here. It is by far the longest and most formal-seeming of all the Savior's popular discourses. Its apparent prevailingly ethical character has commended it to many who are willing to take Jesus as teacher, while not owning the duty of obedience to him as Lord. But Jesus everywhere claims for himself, not simply respect paid as to a teacher, but obedience rendered as to a Lord; and he does this explicitly in the present discourse. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" is one form of expression occurring here in which he makes this claim. Such language from Jesus shows that he accepted from men the appellation, Lord, in the full sense of all that the word implies. It was not a term of respectful, of reverent, homage. It was acknowledgment of duty to obey. Jesus does not found his teachings, in this sermon or elsewhere, on their own inherent self-evidencing character simply, but on the authority also of the teacher. He solemnly glanced forward to a day approaching—"that day," he called it—when he himself as Lord would sit pronouncing judgment on men, saying to some, "I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." The discourse is in fact profoundly religious as well as practically moral.

It has been seriously questioned whether the morality of the Sermon on the Mount is a practicable, and so really a practical, morality. For instance, "Resist not evil," or, as the Revised Version renders, "Resist not him that is evil"—is that a practicable precept? The precept is stated broadly, comprehensively, in a form apparently admitting no exception. Can it be obeyed? Ought we to obey it? Would not obeying it abolish human government? Would it not introduce anarchy into the world—anarchy pure and simple? Would it not dissolve human society?

The question thus raised is, first of all, one of interpretation. What did Jesus mean by the precept? Did he mean all that his language, taken absolutely, can be made to include? Let us see. What was Jesus' method in teaching? It was, to a remarkable extent, probably beyond the practice of any other teacher in the world, the method of paradox. That is, he adopted the teaching expedient of stating truth in a form chosen as if for the purpose of challenging dissent, of provoking contradiction. This way of teaching aroused attention. It set people to thinking. It startled them. The impressions made by it were immediate, striking, strong, rememberable. How is one to understand a teacher whose method is such? Evidently, by inquiry, by reflection, by study, by comparison of one saying of his with another, by teachably entering into his spirit, by invoking light to be shed on his doctrine from his own practice. Now, although Jesus himself did, for the most part, refrain from resisting evil with force, he constantly resisted it with words—and sometimes, as we have already seen, and as we shall yet further see, with very vehement words. On one occasion—an occasion described in a previous chapter—we have even witnessed the author of the precept, "Resist not evil," arming himself with a scourge, and thus with noble violence resisting and chastising the wicked behavior of men. By and by, we shall come to a case in which the Lamb of God, about to be laid unresisting on the altar of sacrifice, yet, for a moment at least, rouses to such withstanding of evil that those who have come to arrest him are thrown helplessly prostrate before him on the ground. He also at about the same moment bids his disciples sell their cloaks that they might buy themselves swords. Did he mean this last bidding literally? We instinctively think not; though (strangely, as would seem) the disciples, some of them at least, carried swords that night with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane.

If he did not mean literally the injunction to exchange cloaks for swords, no more did he mean literally and absolutely his contrary injunction of non-resistance to evil. What he meant by, "Resist not evil," was something practicable. So, also, he meant something practicable, when, in this same great discourse, he said, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." He could not have meant that we should always give to every applicant whatever he might demand. Literally and absolutely taken, this would oblige parents to give to a child of theirs anything that that child, whatever his age, might capriciously ask for, though to his certain and perhaps serious hurt. It would oblige us to give money to a drunkard asking it, though we might well enough know—nay, though he might himself at the same moment tell us—that he wished it to spend in drink, to his own ruin.

What then is the interpretation to be applied to these and other like paradoxical precepts of Jesus? How are we to arrive at his own real meaning in them? As has been said, it must be in large part by comparing one precept of his with another. If we did not "resist," for example, a robber, we might sometimes through him lose everything that would enable us to "give" to one asking us for help and really needing it. And we should at the same time be injuring, rather than benefiting, the robber. There is one precept—a key-precept—in the Sermon on the Mount, which furnishes us our required solution of all the rest. It is that precept which has received the name of the Golden Rule: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them." This precept stands in an instructive relation to what precedes it. Jesus has just been teaching religion, in its profoundest act and spirit—the act and spirit of prayer. He has told his disciples to ask from God, in perfect confidence that God will bestow what they ask. He draws a parallel between God as Father, on the one hand, and earthly parents on the other. Do not earthly parents give when their children ask? But do not earthly parents give with care, with exercise of judgment, with discrimination? If a hungry child asks for a stone, thinking it a loaf of bread, does the parent give him that stone? "If ye, then," Jesus says, "being evil, know *how* to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in

heaven give good things [perhaps not the precise things desired—such being not “good”] to them that ask him?” Then immediately follows the Golden Rule, but with a “therefore” in it: “All things, therefore”; “all things,” that is to say, in a way of such thoughtful discrimination (exercised according to our less measure of judgment) as God himself exercises on our behalf in his bestowing, so we are to do as we would be done by. The principle of unselfish discrimination exercised by us on behalf of all the interests involved in any given case—this is the master-key to the difficult problems met with in the paradoxical precepts of Jesus, as it is the master-key to the ethical doubts and perplexities of our daily social life. We are to practice non-resistance within the limits thus prescribed; within the same limits, we are to practice a free-handed benevolence.

Obedience to Jesus is a practicable, and, therefore, a practical, morality. But it is more and better than that. It is the height, the depth, the length, the breadth, of religion. Jesus closes his sermon with an impressive figure, designed to show the contrasted ends resulting to two contrasted classes of his hearers, the obedient, on the one hand, and the disobedient, on the other. And the obedience and the disobedience are both represented by him to be toward himself. “These words of mine,” is the phrase in which he makes his august, overawing assumption of authority. No wonder the evangelist added, that when Jesus “ended these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as their scribes.” It was a new voice in the world. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

CHAPTER VIII.

AT CAPERNAUM AND TO NAIN.

AFTER delivering his sermon on the Mount, Jesus apparently returned for a short stay, perhaps in pursuit of needed rest, to his abode in Capernaum. But he was followed as usual by multitudes. On his arrival in the city, he was met by a noteworthy fresh application for help. It came from a centurion. The centurion may have brought it himself in person; but he strengthened his appeal with influence from without. He got certain elders of the Jews to intercede for him. They were willing to do this, for the reason that, as they represented to Jesus, he, though a Gentile, was friendly to the Jewish nation, and had shown his generous good will by building them a synagogue. What the centurion wanted, was relief for a servant of his. This would naturally be a slave; indeed, the Greek word means bond-servant. It speaks well for the humane spirit of the centurion that he was thus warmly interested on behalf of his slave; for the slave-owners of that old Roman world were as a rule hardhearted toward their human chattels. This suffering slave was “dear” to his master, and he now lay at the point of death. Jesus promptly said, “I will come and heal him.” The Lord’s very different ways of meeting different applicants for help, must, it is instinctive to suppose, have been nicely discriminated in adaptation to their different characters. In the present case, the centurion had a chance to show himself a man of rare quality. It was not a perfectly obvious chance. He might have missed it without serious blame. But he did not miss it; for he made in substance this remarkable reply: “Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst thyself come. Say the word, and my servant shall be healed. I am accustomed myself both to obey and to be obeyed. Obedience is a familiar thing to me. All that those over me bid, I do; all that I bid those under me, they do. Thus let it be now. Speak only, and thou shalt be obeyed, in whatever thou wilt.” It is recorded that Jesus “marveled.” Taken literally, this seems



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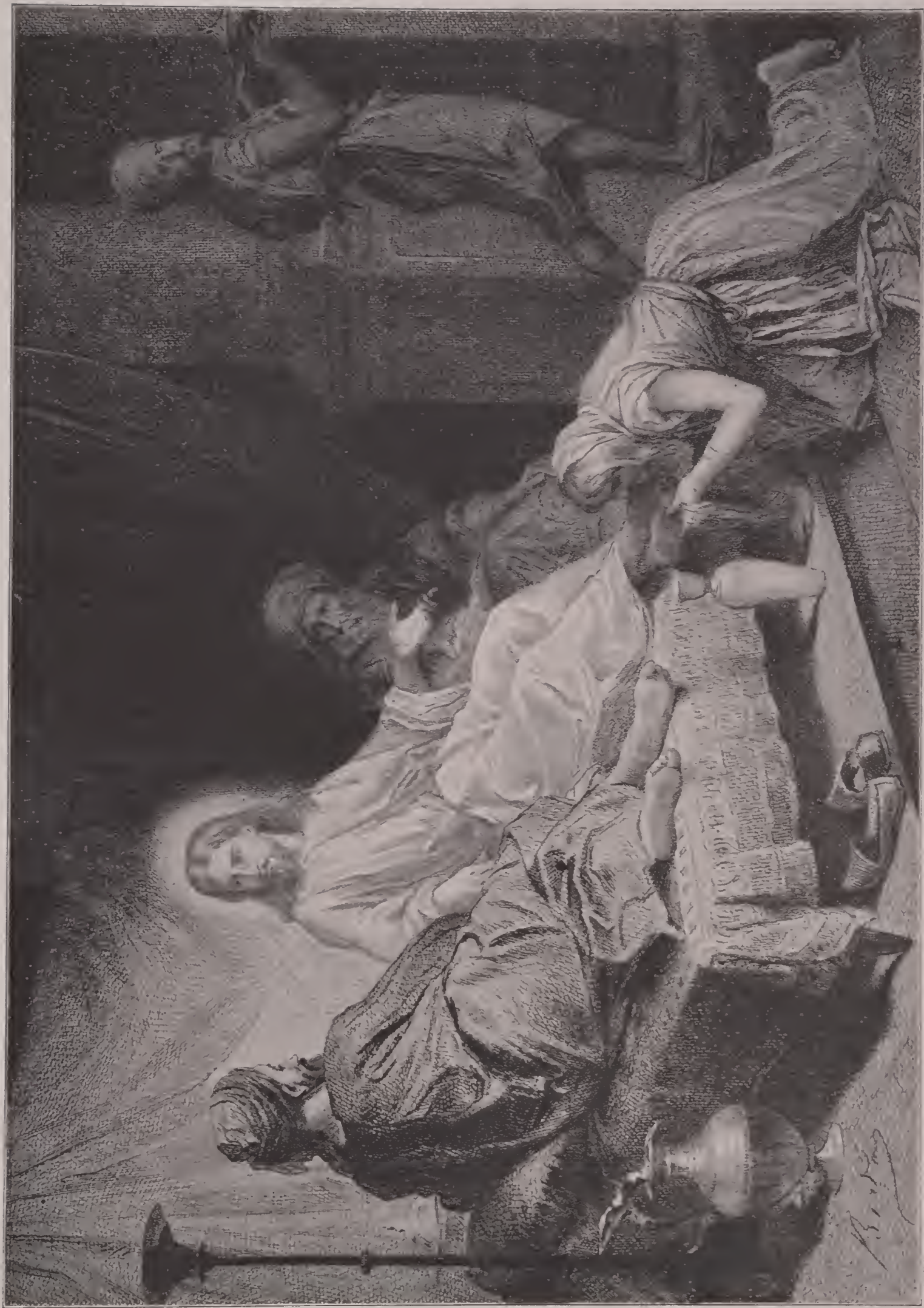
CHRIST RAISETH THE WIDOW'S SON.

to imply that the centurion's answer was unforeseen by him; that it took him by surprise. Perhaps indeed the Lord's supernatural knowledge was at command only as he needed it; so that his potential possession of it left his natural human experience in the main quite undisturbed. He turned to the multitude and exclaimed with admiration, "Verily I say unto you I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." He added what was well adapted to excite jealousy in narrowly Jewish hearts, but what was of a purport to be good news indeed to all the world besides to the end of time: "Many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." Then followed words that would tend to inflame selfish jealousy, if that sentiment existed, into resentment and rage: "But the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." Dreadful words, to issue from those lips! During this aside of Jesus to the multitude, the centurion had waited; but he now heard his own gracious dismissal: "Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." And the servant was healed in that hour.

From Capernaum to Nain the distance is about twenty-five miles. Jesus soon after what has just been narrated, perhaps the very next day, made an excursion to Nain. His disciples accompanied him, and the usual "great multitude." As he neared the city gate, behold, a procession was coming out. It was a funeral procession. The dead was a youth, the only son of a widowed mother. This case of bereavement had excited much sympathy; the procession was a numerous one. The sight of that desolated mother touched the heart of the Lord. She was weeping as only such a mother knows how. Jesus said to her, "Weep not." With those words, he drew nigh and touched the bier. The bearers stopped and stood still. It was a moment of hush, no doubt, to the loud lamentations that had preceded, and of excited suspense. Jesus must have been known to those whom he met, and uncertain expectation of the strange thing that might now happen, we cannot doubt, filled all hearts. But probably no one was prepared for what actually did occur. Jesus spoke to the dead youth on his bier, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" Then occurred a fulfillment of that prophecy of Jesus, uttered not long before to the unbelieving Jews at Jerusalem: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." For "he that was dead sat up and began to speak." And Jesus gave him to his mother.

Nothing equal in wonder to this had as yet anywhere before happened in the history of Jesus. The fame and rumor of it went abroad not only throughout Judea, but beyond into the region surrounding. It penetrated to the dungeon in which John the Baptist was confined. This unconquerable spirit, though unconquered indeed, was depressed enough by his imprisonment to be in need of reassurance. His heart was full of public zeal, which his personal sufferings could not extinguish. He sent some of his disciples to inquire of Jesus, "Art thou he that cometh or look we for another?" "Go your way and tell John," said Jesus, "the things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me." We may confidently hope that this message was by the Holy Spirit made effective to comfort and strengthen that great generous heart. The closing sentence of it especially must have been felt by John as a spur to his spirit. When John's disciples were gone, Jesus took occasion to pronounce that eulogy on John which has already been given in these pages—brief, but the most magnificent eulogy ever pronounced on any of the children of men.

A touching and beautiful incident occurred at about this time—it is uncertain where, but probably at Capernaum—which contributes a pathetic charm, quite beyond the reach of human art, to the wonderful variety of picturesque stories told in the Gospels illustrative of the endlessly many-sided character and behavior of Jesus. One Simon, a Pharisee, desired Jesus



MARY MAGDALEN AT CHRIST'S FEET.

to be his guest at a meal. The openness to the public eye, the freedom even of public access, with which the domestic life of the Jews was conducted, has already been remarked upon. This trait now receives a curious illustration. A woman expressly marked by the evangelist as "a sinner," that is, an unchaste woman, made her way unhindered into the house. She came to the place where Jesus sat at the table. It was not a chance intrusion of hers. She had learned that Jesus was there, and she came prepared to do him honor, with her love and her tears. She brought with her a cruse of ointment, an alabaster cruse. She did not present herself to Jesus; she did not stand before him; but behind him, "at his feet." Here, apparently without a word spoken, she stood and wept in silence. Her tears fell in a stream that wet the Savior's feet. She bowed and wiped those feet with the flowing hair of her head. She kissed them with passionate fervor, kiss after kiss. Beautiful dumb demonstration of love, with sorrow—love such as, though dumb in humility and shame, must yet somehow express itself! And what eloquence beyond words did that love with sorrow achieve! Alas, Simon! His heart was not equal to his opportunity. He missed to see what was there to be seen. The poor foolish man, in his self-blinding conceit of sagacity, was saying within himself: "This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is which toucheth him, that she is a sinner." Though Simon had only thought these things, not spoken them, Jesus showed himself indeed a prophet by perceiving very plainly "who and what manner" of man *he* was. "Simon," said Jesus, "I have somewhat to say to thee." Such an offer of remark would prepare special attention. "Master, say on," was Simon's token of readiness to hear. A little parable, the first one recorded from Jesus' lips, was the form under which the great teacher by parable now gave Simon his lesson: "A certain lender had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. When they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most? Simon answered and said, He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged."

Up to this point, the application of the parable could not have been apparent, perhaps to anyone present. The Lord now turned toward the woman; but he still spoke to Simon. "Seest thou this woman?" He spoke thus of her in her own presence; but it was with a tenderness that emptied the seeming discourtesy of any disrespect. The disrespect was all to be toward him who deserved it; for Simon deserved rebuke, not only by his personal character, but also by his conduct on that occasion as host. He had failed of due customary attention to his guest. Apparently he had invited Jesus, either out of a mere supercilious curiosity to see, at dignified leisure for himself, a man so much talked of; or else, perhaps, also out of a covert hostility to him. At any rate, he seems to have discriminated against Jesus, by omitting in his case the usual little preliminary offices of hospitality which Eastern manners accord to a guest. "I entered," said the Lord, "into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath wetted my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. Thou gavest me no kiss: but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many [this would show the Lord's full knowledge of her character], are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." Simon's secret thoughts have thus been openly answered, in a manner as self-evidently just, as it must have been both unexpected and unwelcome to Simon. The woman now is for the first time addressed: "Thy sins [to *her* not spoken of as 'many'] are forgiven." This seems to have offended more than Simon alone; for Jesus' fellow-guests began to say within themselves, perhaps also in undertone among themselves (the Greek may mean either), "Who is this that even forgiveth sins?" If this question was possibly overheard by the jealous ears of the woman, to her momentary discomposure, her fears must have been effectively allayed, when

Jesus added, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." But the evil spirit of unbelief in those who criticised was no doubt confirmed. The same thing may be a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. It is as we ourselves choose.

Will the woman thus forgiven attach herself thenceforth to her Savior? Our next chapter opens a new and remarkable epoch in the Lord's history. Perhaps among the "many others,"—that is, many other women, there to be spoken of—this loving penitent, with something of an unconscious poet-heart in her bosom, may be supposed namelessly included. The supposition would be grateful; and her possession and devotion of that alabaster cruse of ointment are in favor of the conjecture.

CHAPTER IX.

A CYCLE OF PARABLES.

SOON after the incident last related, Jesus seems to have set out from Capernaum on another preaching tour in Galilee. This time a new feature marked his progress. It was a feature as beautiful as, to us of the West, it appears foreign and singular. Besides the twelve apostles, a select different following attended him. This was a band of women; women who, grateful for services rendered them by him, thus as a way of testifying their love and their thanks attached themselves to his train to go with him in his journeys. They seem not to have been poor women; but women able to defray their own charges in traveling, and besides to contribute, as we are told they did, out of their private resources to the comfort of their Master. Their ministration they doubtless found to be its own exceeding rich reward. Mary Magdalen is named first among these ministering women. Of her, it is said that she had been delivered from a sevenfold possession of demons. There is no good reason to suppose that this Mary had previously been, according to the slander of the current tradition concerning her, a woman of lewd life.

In the course of his various circuits starting from Capernaum, Jesus may not improbably have made somewhat frequent returns for rest—such rest as he could command—at his abode in that city. On one such occasion, the concourse of people thronging him in this refuge of his was so great and so eager that "they"—that is, he and his household—could not so much as take their ordinary meals. We cannot be surprised that Jesus' "friends"—his kindred perhaps may be meant by the word—were concerned on his behalf; that they even thought it time to interfere. They interfered, and with zeal. They used, or sought to use, a gentle violence in restraint of him. "For they said, He is beside himself." A fresh instance of exorcism at his hands, taking place at this time, in concurrence perhaps with these forcible attempts of his friends to save him from himself as one not perfectly sane, gave somewhat plausible occasion to certain scribes come down from Jerusalem, to apply their interpretation to the phenomena presented in the highly eccentric case of this notorious man Jesus. "He hath Beelzebub," they said; "by the prince of the demons he casts out the demons." Jesus was excited to an unusual pitch of indignation by this blasphemous charge, laid against him, of collusion on his part with the kingdom of evil. "All their sins," he said, "shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and their blasphemies wherewith they shall blaspheme: but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin." The Evangelist Mark expressly adds, "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." Maliciously attributing to Satan the authentic work of the Holy Spirit, is the "unpardonable

sin." It is "an eternal sin." It reproduces itself forever; or perhaps we should understand that dreadful expression, "an eternal sin," to mean that it entails consequences of penalty which endure forever. "Ye offspring of vipers!" so Jesus addresses those blaspheming opponents of his. Vengeful words! They were like a drawn sword of flame from his lips. They burn yet on the printed page. One can easily imagine that, when uttered, they seemed hot enough to consume their objects with the breath of his mouth.

The insolent scribes and Pharisees present, although they probably had just witnessed that casting out of the demon, said they would like to see a "sign" from Jesus. Jesus indignantly refused them their request. "An evil and adulterous generation," he sternly said, "seeketh after a sign." He said that there should be no sign given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah. Then came from Jesus the second of his many allusions, allusions growing ever more and more distinct toward the end, to his own impending death and resurrection; the first allusion was more closely veiled, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it again." "As Jonah," he said, "was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale [rather, sea-monster]; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Both these two first allusions were addressed to unbelievers who demanded a "sign"; and it was in accordance with the Lord's usual manner toward such hearers, to speak darkly in parable. Jesus, in so paralleling Jonah's case with his own, seems to give the weight of his authority in favor of that interpretation of the Old Testament story in question which makes it not only historical but literal.

In the midst of the discourse following the request for a sign, or immediately upon the end of it, a strange exclamation addressed to Jesus came from the ranks of the multitude. It was a woman that uttered it. "Blessed," she cried, "is the womb that bare thee and the breasts which thou didst suck." This admiring and affectionate congratulation, spoken of Mary, but meant for Jesus, Jesus turned aside from his mother to bestow the benediction of it elsewhere. "Yea, rather," said he, "blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." It may be that the emotional woman who spoke up as narrated, had just had pointed out to her Jesus' mother herself, at that moment, with her other sons, seeking access to Jesus. For "while he was yet speaking," so it is said, "his mother and his brethren stood without seeking to speak to him." Word to this effect passed on from one to another till it reached Jesus. Whether or not Jesus gratified the wish thus conveyed to him, is not expressly stated. The probability seems to be that he did not. He said, "Who is my mother and my brethren?" Then he looked round on them that encompassed him, and said, "Behold my mother and my brethren. For whoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother." It is likely that the mother Mary, with her younger sons, had come on a second errand of interference to Jesus, to dissuade him from the work that he was doing. They may have feared for his personal safety, seeing the enmity he excited among the Jewish ruling classes; possibly they were desirous to have it openly appear that they were influentially related to a personage so conspicuous as Jesus had become. Whatever was the case, their aim was frustrated. Jesus took the opportunity to declare himself independent enough of ordinary earthly relationships of kindred, to disregard them entirely. But in doing so, how endearingly near to himself he draws every soul, in every time, in every clime, that simply and sincerely does the will of God! This caressing embrace in words from Jesus of all obedient hearts, did not exclude anyone because it included everyone. Mary, too, and each one of his earthly kindred as well, might, if they would, find a home in that capacious bosom of love thus opening wide, and equally wide, for the welcome of us all.

Jesus found the seaside, or as we should say, the lakeside, highly favorable for his purposes in teaching. It offered him an easy escape from the too importunate pressure of the crowd. It was apparently on the same day with the incident of his mother's coming to seek him, that he



BIDA

PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

went out again to the waterside, and there, withdrawn a little way in a boat, taught the people standing in thick ranks on the shore. If one could see a photographic picture of the scene! At this time he first entered fully upon his method of teaching by parables. Why at this time? Why at all? It is a mistake to suppose that it was solely, or even chiefly, to make his instructions easily understood. That was not the Savior's object in uttering parables; and it certainly was not the result that followed. Indeed, on this very occasion, we learn that his more immediate disciples, those closest in his confidence, sought to have his parables explained to them. They also asked him, "Why speakest thou unto them [the multitude] in parables?" Jesus' reply should be deeply pondered: "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. . . . Therefore speak I to them in parables; because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not." Mark and Luke make the Lord's words even more solemn: "Unto them that are without, all things are done in parables: that seeing they may see and not perceive; and hearing they may hear and not understand." The main first purpose, then, of the parable, in the Lord's use of it, was not to make clear, it was rather to veil, instruction. But that, we may well believe, was far from being its only purpose. It has, in fact, proved a marvelously fruitful form of wrapping up, or enfolding, for future use, instruction which, at the time when it was first given, was beyond the capacity of intelligence, above the reach of moral elevation, existing in those who received it. This has turned out to be the actual utility of the Lord's parables; and such utility in them was no doubt foreseen and intended by their author.

But there may be discovered a call for teaching by parable, peculiar to that particular stage which Jesus had now reached in the fulfillment of his Messianic mission. His miracles had excited universal attention; they had commanded for the worker of them a very general popular belief. But this belief was for the most part very superficial, very unsatisfactory. It did not rise, except in a comparatively small number of cases, to the faith of true discipleship. It created for Jesus a popularity indeed, but a useless popularity; a popularity that might even be worse than useless. There was danger of its forcing on the end prematurely. Jesus had now, by a somewhat extensive canvass of the field, come "to his own," in a sense a few degrees wider than had been the case at Nazareth; and although he had not yet been, in this wider sense of his coming, decisively rejected as he was there, still it was again true that "his own received him not"—that is, received him not as was necessary that he should be received, in order to the establishing of his kingdom. He had given the Galileans their chance, their day of visitation; and they had not known it. There might be a small remnant of them to be won; but the heart of the great mass was waxed hopelessly gross. The Savior would now teach in a way to sift his hearers. Those of his hearers who were rightly disposed, would be drawn to him; and as for the rest, his sentence on them was like that sad sentence of old on reprobate Israel, "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone." There is this melancholy undertone to be discerned in the first of the present cycle of parables, that of the Sower—the purport of which is, that only a sifted few among his hearers heard him to profit and to salvation. The parable and the explanation are both of them too familiar to need any repetition of their lesson here. The same may be said of the parable following, that of the Tares and the Wheat. "Take heed, therefore, how ye hear," is the warning from Jesus, intended to sift his hearers. The rightly disposed among them would be found out by such teaching; found out not so much by him, the teacher, as by themselves, the taught. It would be like the action of a magnet on a mingled mass, composed of particles of iron, few in number, lost amid innumerable grains of sand. The iron particles feel the attraction of the magnet and respond; the grains of sand abide inert and dead. So the susceptible, the obedient, hearts, few in number amid the multitude, would know the Savior's voice, masked though it were in parable; the rest would hear as if they heard not.

It has needed nineteen Christian centuries to furnish that commentary and explanation which we now enjoy, for the parable of the Mustard Seed as symbol of the growth of the kingdom of God. That parable, together with the rest, Jesus explained to the inner circle of his disciples. This particular explanation, however, has not been recorded for us in the Gospels. The parable of the Tares and the Wheat was impressively explained by its author, in terms which we may still read with awe. It was a parable of the "end," as well as of what should precede the end. The "end" meant by the Lord was not, as it is most natural for us to understand it, the end of the world, in the most inclusive sense of that expression, but the end of the order of things then existing; an end, as some suppose, that was reached at the coming of Christ for the destruction of Jerusalem with its temple, and the final abolition therewith of worship according to the ritual of Moses. Others postpone the "end" in question to a time still remaining future. But in any case the sense of the expression, "end of the world," is not, end of the material universe, nor even end of mankind's possession of the earth; but end of the then current age or dispensation. The parable of the Leaven in the meal, that of the Treasure hidden in the field, that of the Pearl of Great Price, and that of the Net cast into the sea, follow one upon another in immediate succession, devoted, all of them, to setting forth the nature of that invisible kingdom of heaven which it was the Lord's work to establish in the earth—the nature of that kingdom, and the relation to it of individual men and women. The effect of all was to make the spiritually prepared search themselves deeply and become disciples indeed; but to leave the unsusceptible, the obstinate, the rebellious, in the darkness which they loved more than the light.

It is pathetic rather than otherwise to read that when Jesus asked his hearers, those chosen hearers who were closest about him, "Have ye understood all these things?" they easily answered, "Yea." At least, judging by their subsequent exhibitions of slowness to apprehend, one cannot but suspect that their apprehension now was very imperfect at the best. But the patient Lord must content himself with what his disciples had; he would not require of them what they had not. Yet it would be strange if some sadness did not often invade his heart, did not invade it now, to feel how far short they stopped of the full height and depth of his meaning.

A CYCLE OF MIRACLES.

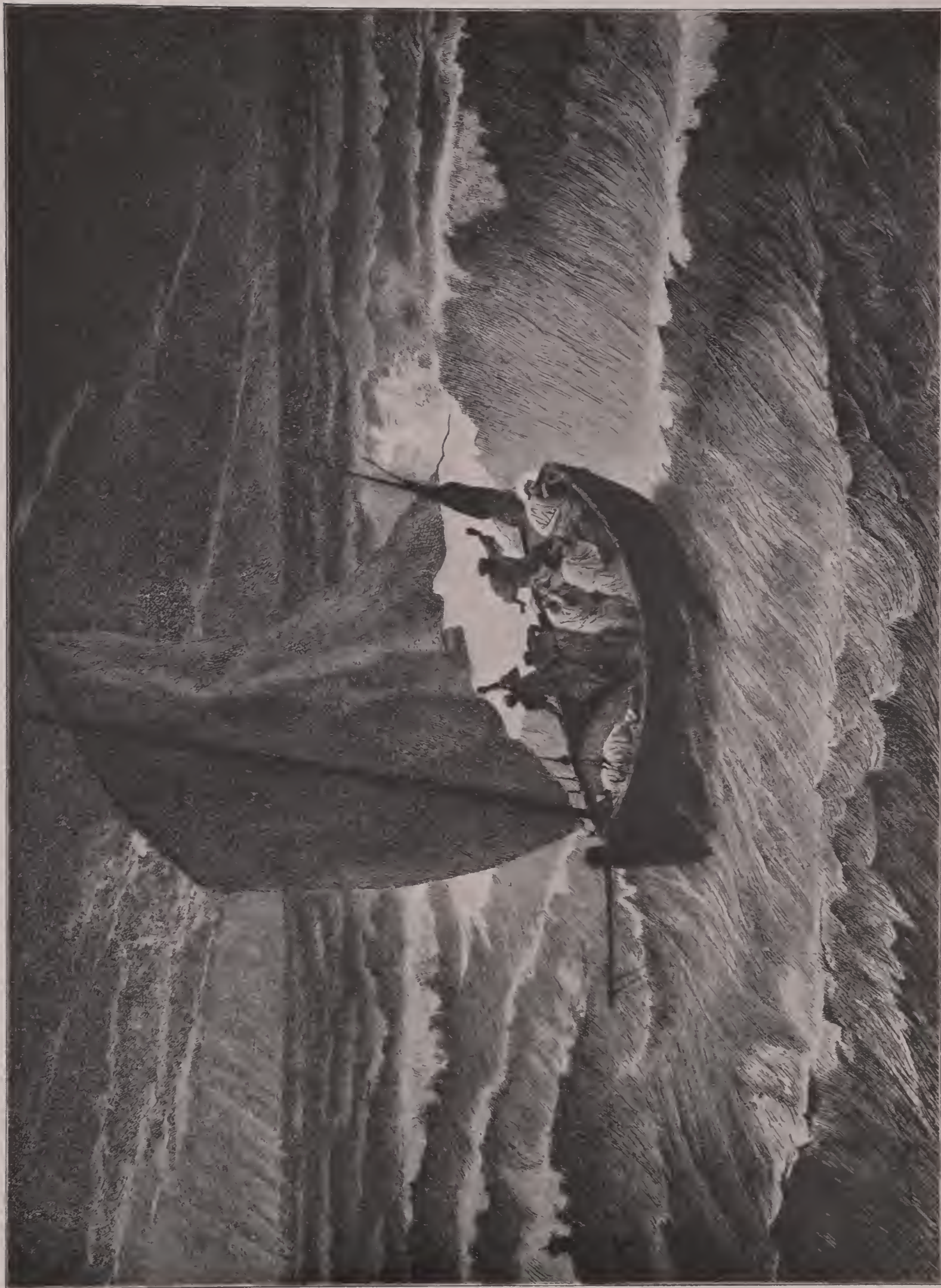
The cycle of parables was succeeded by a cycle of miracles. That crowded day of teaching done, in which the parables already referred to were spoken, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go over unto the other side." That meant the other side of the lake. The going would of course be by water. Their voyage was to prove one that those disciples would never forget. They started at once, without preparation. The boat in which he had sat teaching was the one that bore Jesus; but there were other boats to accompany that. Jesus must have been in a state of extreme fatigue and exhaustion from his labors, not only of that day, but of many days preceding. This is not expressly told us by any one of the three evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, synoptists so-called, who all of them relate the incidents of the voyage. But they unite in saying that Jesus fell asleep on the way. There was a cushion in the stern of the boat on which that sacred head now weary pillowed itself to this grateful rest. While he lay sleeping, the boat was brought suddenly into the most imminent danger. A storm of wind poured down through the gorges in the mountainous eastern shore of the lake, and instantly wrought the water into billows that overswept the little craft and threatened to founder it. The commotion did not disturb the profound repose of that divine-human sleeper. His companions were thoroughly terrified. Their terror for their lives was too much for their awe of their Master. They come to him where he lies sleeping, cradled on that stormy sea like an infant gently lulled by the breathing of its mother to slumber on her breast.

But let us imagine him still sleeping undisturbed, while we listen for a moment to another writer than the evangelists, a man of our own time, telling us what he has himself experienced of just such a sudden violent storm as that described in the Gospels, occurring on the same lake. Dr. Thomson, in his interesting and instructive volumes,¹ says: "I spent a night on the mountains east of the lake. . . . The sun had scarcely set when the wind began to blow towards the lake, and it continued all night long with constantly increasing violence; so that when we descended to the shore the next morning the surface of the lake was like that of a boiling caldron. . . . To understand the causes of these sudden and violent tempests, we must remember that the lake lies low—680 feet below the sea; that the mountainous plateau of the Jaulân rises to a considerable height, spreading backward to the wilds of the Haurân, and upward to snowy Hermon; that the watercourses have worn or washed out profound ravines and wild gorges, converging to the head of this lake; and that these act like great funnels, to draw down the cold winds from the mountains. . . . Such winds are not only violent, but they come down suddenly, and often when the sky is perfectly clear. I once went in to swim near the hot baths; and, before I was aware, a wind came rushing over the cliffs with such force that it was with difficulty I could regain the shore."

The disciples awake their Master. One evangelist makes them say, almost upbraidingly, "Carest thou not that we perish?" Jesus rises, but not until he has said to his trembling companions, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Then he rebukes the roaring wind and the raging sea. "Peace, be still," he calmly said. The deaf winds heard, and the deaf waters too had ears for that voice. The winds ceased blowing, the waves ceased rolling, and there was a great calm. The poor disciples were afraid now with a different fear. "They feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

From a lake whose present calm was as full to them of awfulness as had been its storm, they stepped ashore, these rescued voyagers, in the country of the Gerasenes. Whether that same night, or not till the next morning, is uncertain. Whichever the time, they were fiercely and startlingly welcomed to land. For two violent demoniacs met them, with excited outcry and with menacing gesture. These wretched creatures had come out of the tombs which like wild beasts they made their lairs. The mountain-side was pierced then—it remains so now—with excavations in the rock, made for burial-places. Here dwelt these two demon-ridden human beings, making the neighborhood so dangerous for passers-by that it was avoided by all. But stress of weather had driven thither those who now landed at the spot. The clamor of the demoniacs was directed to Jesus. "What have we," they cried, "to do with thee, thou son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" For Jesus had bidden the unclean spirits forth. One of the two invading demon forces was spokesman for both. This one was perhaps much more truculent than the other; so that Mark speaks only of him. "What is thy name?" said Jesus. "Legion; for we are many," was the reply. The demons seem to have had a shuddering horror of being banished back to their "abyss." They preferred to Jesus a singular request, which Jesus, with a singular complaisance, granted. Perhaps it was in part to show the absolute power that he wielded, for sufferance also as well as for prohibition. The demons pleaded that they might be allowed to go from their dwelling-places in men to lodgment in swine. There was a herd of these unclean beasts feeding on the mountain-side. Jesus said, "Go." They went; and for proof not to be gainsaid that they indeed went, and that they actually existed to go, the swine, so invaded, instantly start and with a headlong rush plunge impetuously down the steep slope of the mountain. They cannot stop at the bottom; their impetus carries them over the narrow ledge of level shore into the deep water of the lake, where they are all drowned, to the number of about two thousand.

¹ "The Land and the Book," II, pp. 351, 352.



JESUS ASLEEP DURING THE STORM

The swineherds were frightened at the irreparable catastrophe; they fled, scattering the news of what had happened. People flocked from city and country to the spot, that they might see for themselves what was there to be seen. They came to Jesus, he having been described to them perhaps, or being in some way now recognized by them, as the responsible author of the miracle; and there they find the man that had been so afflicted sitting at his Savior's feet. He had been for a long time too savage to wear clothes; but he was clothed now, and in his right mind. Those who had seen what occurred report their observations to the new comers; and then a thing that was hardly to have been looked for resulted. Those unaccountable Gerasenes commenced beseeching Jesus to depart! They obtained their desire; for Jesus reëntered his boat and crossed back to the other side of the lake. The relieved victim of that evil possession desired to go with Jesus. But no; Jesus replied: "Go to thy house unto thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." This was a deviation on Jesus' part from what had previously been his course in similar cases. Perhaps the deviation was due to a compassionate wish that he had, not to let that region of country, so inhospitable to him, remain utterly without witness of the salvation that had just visited it in vain.

Objection has sometimes been made against this miracle of Jesus that it was a wanton destruction of property; in effect, a wrongful infringement of proprietary rights. The objection has no force whatever that does not lie as strongly, nay, more strongly, against the suffering of demoniacal possession in general. If God could permit a man to be deprived of himself by a demon, much more might God permit men to be so deprived of property; especially if that property were of a questionable sort, as was the case with those swine. The simple fact is, that as against the Creator, there is no right whatever of property vested in any creature. If God was working there, in what Jesus did or what Jesus permitted, then who are we to argue against God? Or who are we to say, This was unworthy of God, and therefore God did not do it? We may easily be more ingenious than judicious in criticising God's ways, and finding reasons, whether for or against. A brilliant agnostic writer has recently made himself very merry laughing at this story of the Gerasene swine as a thing quite too ridiculous for sober belief. He was more witty than wise in doing so. It would be a quite adequate justification of the Lord's conduct, in according to the demons their whimsical request, if his object in so doing was only to furnish an irrefutable evidence of the reality of such evil beings; and of the reality of their power, under sufferance from God, to take violent possession of alien animal organisms, human and other, and wield them to their own perverse will. Without this evidence against such unbelieving explanation of the phenomena involved, it would be much more easy than it actually is, to maintain, as some do, that demoniacal possession in Jesus' time, was simply a superstitious name for epilepsy, catalepsy, lunacy, or other like commonplace disorder. It may properly be noted that alternative names for the region in which this incident occurred, are employed by different evangelists. Of course, the locality may anciently have had duplicate, or even triplicate, designations; but the name which, in native use on the spot, has survived, under some modification, to our day, is approximately the one here given, "the country of the Gerasenes."

The Savior was now again by the sea on its western side, where a multitude was already assembled to welcome his return. He no doubt resumed his teaching, but his teaching was presently interrupted. One Jairus, a man of consideration in the community, for he was a ruler of the synagogue, came to him with a petition for help. His earnestness was extreme; it made him both importunate and humble. Jewish magnate as he was, he fell at Jesus' feet, and besought him "much." His daughter was dying, "my little daughter," he piteously and affectionately called her. One evangelist has Jairus say, "My daughter is even now dead." After his first plea to Jesus, the father did, indeed, get word, brought him from his home, that all was over with his little beloved. His hope of help was not even so quenched. "Come and

lay thy hand upon her and she shall live," he said. It was a beautiful triumph of love and faith over despair. Jesus went with Jairus, and the multitude followed. They followed so close that they pressed upon the person of the Lord. In the midst of the multitude, was a poor sick woman, victim of an incurable disease that had drained not only her strength but her purse. Twelve years long she had been suffering many things under the hands of many physicians, and all that time had grown steadily worse rather than better. But she had heard of Jesus and she said secretly to herself, "Here yet is hope for me, even me. I cannot expect to attract his attention, I may not get near enough to him to take hold of his hands or his feet; if I can but touch the hem of his garment! He need not know it; no one need know it; but it will cure me, if I succeed. I will try." She tried and she succeeded. O gladness! that instant "the fountain of her blood [which for twelve years had never ceased draining her life] was dried up and she felt in her body that she was healed." But she was also found out in this her successful attempt at larceny of life and of health! Jesus perceived that the peculiar power which was his had gone forth, and, staying his steps, he turned round to the throng and said, "Who touched my garments?" The woman was frightened. Happily for her momentary relief, when one and another had denied and she thus stood increasingly in danger of being exposed, Peter spoke up in unintended, unconscious defense and concealment of her. "Master," said he, "the multitudes press thee and crush thee." Perhaps she would escape detection after all! But no; Jesus insists: "Some one did touch me." It was the vital touch of faith that he had felt. The woman saw that there was no use in trying longer to remain concealed. She came tremblingly forward and, falling down at his feet, confessed her secret touch, and declared aloud to all how with the touch she had at once been healed. Then these words fell like a dew of healing benediction from those holy lips, words paternal in benignity though addressed no doubt by one junior to one senior in age: "Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole."

Now it is that the final, fatal message, already alluded to, comes from the synagogue-ruler's house, "Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master." The Master speaks, and says to Jairus, "Fear not; only believe." And on they move, Jesus perhaps at every step, we know not, dropping balm of healing on his way. Arrived at the house, Jesus stays the multitude, even the apostles—all but Peter, James, and John—outside the door. The customary loud lamentation over the dead had already commenced. Jesus calmly says, "Why make ye a tumult and weep? The child is not dead, but sleepeth." They stopped their lamentation enough to laugh the speaker to scorn, "knowing that she was dead." But Jesus put them all forth—no question of his right or of his power!—and taking with him the father, the mother, and those three chosen disciples of his, goes into the room where the child lay. There all was simple, all majestic; for omnipotence was there. Jesus took the dead child by her little cold, white hand and said, "Maiden, arise." She immediately arose and walked. "And he commanded that something should be given her to eat!" The age of the damsel is recorded. She was twelve years old. The Lord gave strict charge that nothing be told of what had thus been done. But the fame of it went everywhere abroad. How could it be otherwise? And why did Jesus impose a command that he no doubt knew would not be obeyed? Yet the obedient would obey; and such would not miss the reward of having triumphantly endured a test of obedience so severe. Meantime the apostles would gradually be prepared to understand that their Master did not build his hopes of success in his mission mainly on miracle-working; much less on the notoriety that miracles earned for their author.

Miracles were the largess that this prince in his progresses through his land—progresses accomplished on foot, and with such a following!—scattered everywhere with prodigal bounty. He was passing from the house of Jairus on his way, when two blind men took up a pursuit of him. "Have mercy on us, thou Son of David," they cried aloud as they went. This is the first

mention of Jesus' being called by that royal title of his, "Son of David." He reached "the house," perhaps his own house, perhaps Peter's, and the blind men find him there. "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" he asked them. "Yea, Lord," they said. The measure of the faith that they had, not the measure of the faith they professed, should be the measure of the blessing bestowed. Jesus answered, "According to your faith be it done unto you," at the same time touching their eyes. Their eyes were opened and they saw. Jesus was strict in enjoining it upon them not to tell what he had done. But they went forth and spread his fame abroad. These men, joyful perhaps rather than grateful, since they were not obedient, were no sooner gone out of the door, than there was brought to Jesus a demon-ridden wretch who was dumb. His evil inmate had the malicious whim to keep his victim from the use of his vocal organs. The demon was cast out and the dumb man spoke. There was much marveling on the part of the multitude, but the marveling, it is to be feared, was that of idle and gossiping curiosity, rather than that of reverence and faith. The Pharisees, for their part, applied again their easy, their blasphemous, explanation, "By the prince of the demons he casts out demons." It was a sad, but a fit, conclusion to such a display of power to save as had thus been made by Jesus apparently to so little permanent spiritual result, when he now for the last time returned to Nazareth once more, to be there finally and decisively rejected by his fellow townspeople. Poor benighted souls! "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" Thus they thought and talked. "And they were offended in him." "And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk and healed them." And Jesus "marveled," as it is noted that he had marveled once before. Before, he marveled at the faith of a foreigner, a heathen. This time it was at the unbelief of Jews, his own neighbors.

CHAPTER X.

THE FAREWELL TOUR IN MIDDLE GALILEE.

OUR Lord's laborious circuits of cities and villages have thus far been confined almost wholly to that district of country which we may venture to designate as Middle Galilee, with Capernaum for center. He will soon transfer his activities elsewhere. But the present chapter has still to deal with work done in the same circle of territory. It will describe the Lord's farewell tour of preaching in the region that had already been favored, beyond what had been any other or would be any other in the world, with the words of his mouth and with the works of his hand. Preaching is, as it has been before, the object; but miracles, as they have done before, will attend incidentally—for the most part, miracles of healing; but in one case, a miracle of beneficence, creative, and wrought on a colossal scale; and in another, an exceptional case, a miracle of what might seem almost like pure demonstration.

The thronging of the multitudes, seen to be so needy, and in the main so unconscious of that need in them which was deepest, filled the heart of the Lord with pity of their plight. There was far more to be done in supply of the popular wants than one person could do, though that person were the Son of God as well as the Son of Man. Jesus determined on sending out his apostles to preach and to work wonders of exorcism and of healing. The country was populous beyond what we readily conceive. The contracted little region of Galilee, scarcely so large as the State of Delaware, only a trifle larger than the English county of Lancaster, is said by



JESUS HEALETH THE DEAF MAN.

Josephus to have contained 204 cities of not less than 15,000 inhabitants each. The central portion was at least as densely peopled as any other. To visit so many swarming towns with the Gospel, was a great undertaking. Jesus gave his twelve apostles instructions for their guidance which he afterward in large part duplicated to "the seventy" of his disciples whom he despatched on a similar errand of itinerant evangelism. He bade them restrict their ministry to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" — these, as distinguished from the Gentiles, on the one hand, and even the Samaritans, on the other. It was not time yet for the predestined mission to the world at large. The missionary apostles were to go from city to city; if persecuted in one city, fleeing to another. It seems as if the directions given them went beyond the requirements of the tour immediately in prospect, and took in by anticipation the work which they would have to do after their Lord should be crucified. He said, "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come" — language most naturally referred to Christ's coming for the destruction of Jerusalem. He faithfully forewarned them that they would encounter hardship and suffering. "Fear not," he said. Men would threaten, men would persecute, men would put to death. "Be not afraid," said Jesus, "of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Somber exhortation! But the exhortation was supported by promise. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered. . . . Everyone therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father who is in heaven." Strict, even stern, is the claim that this unique Teacher advances on his own behalf to paramount, to supreme, allegiance on the part of his followers — allegiance overriding every other, the most sacred, tie of obligation that can hold between one human being and another. "He that loveth father or mother more than me," said Jesus, "is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." That, for his sake, a disciple of his should "hate" "his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also," was another form from Jesus' lips of the same enormous claim for himself. When ever was other such teacher as he? The accompanying promises were as large and as confident as the claims; and both claims and promises were often put in that language of paradox which this Teacher loved. "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it;" "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me;" "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward;" — such were some of the assurances given by Jesus to sustain the hearts of the disciples under the staggering weight of responsibility and danger thrust upon them. One cannot but imagine that, when the foregoing last thing was said by Jesus in sending his apostles forth, some outside hearers had drawn near; and that to those outside hearers as well as to the apostles themselves, that last thing was partly addressed. The Lord softened with prophetic compassion and sympathy toward his disciples, thus about to go out as lambs in the midst of wolves, and tenderly, with a kind of affectionate diminutive, he called them "these little ones"; at the same time bespeaking for them, at the hands of any and all, offices of kindness, which for their sake he promised, and promised "verily," should, down even to the gift of a cup of cold water only, not be suffered to go without grateful reward. Strange and beautiful mingling of magisterial severity with graciousness ineffably thoughtful and sweet!

The undertone of pathos that, from a point a little earlier than the one now reached, the susceptible ear hears moaning in a gentle crescendo throughout the whole subsequent history, breaks for a moment here into a clear note of tragedy, with the record of the death of John the Baptist in prison. To think of that greatest of the prophets, that willing, that generous, that joyous, self-effacer, that morning-star forerunning the Sun — to think of him beheaded in prison, just to meet the prompted whim of a wanton dancing-girl at a royal feast!

When news of the fate of John was brought to Jesus, it seemed to him a warning that he must heed. He withdrew by boat to a place of retirement. But there was no place of retirement for Jesus. Wherever he went, he drew the tide after him as the moon draws the sea. Poor weary footfarers, the people took the circuit of the lake shore and found him out where he was. Indeed, they had made such speed in running, that they were on the ground before him. He could not resist the eloquence of such importunity. He had compassion on them and healed their sick. But there was more need to be provided for than that which consisted in cases, comparatively few, of sickness seeking relief. Evening came on and that inconsiderate crowd were without food in the desert. The disciples saw the state of the case, and they begged the Master to send the multitude away that in the cities and villages round about they might buy themselves food. "Give ye them to eat," said the Lord. The disciples were dumfounded. He had commanded an impossibility; and they virtually told him this. He bade them find out and report to him the resources actually in hand. "Five loaves, and two fishes"—a ludicrously inadequate supply. This supply seems to have been in the hands of a boy present there, who probably, with a forecasting eye to business, had brought it thither for sale to the highest bidder. We gather this from John's account, who tells us that Andrew said, "There is a lad here with five barley loaves and two fishes." Little, but enough for seed, in the hands of a husbandman like Jesus! He bade his disciples make the multitude take seats on the grass, which was plenty in the place, arranging themselves in groups of hundreds and fifties. This arrangement made counting easy. The number of the multitude proved to be about five thousand souls; and there were women and children not reckoned in this summation.

Jesus took the five loaves and the two fishes, and, lifting his eyes homeward toward heaven, first of all gave thanks. (There must have been something peculiarly impressive in this giving of thanks by the Lord. John refers to it incidentally afterward in a manner that indicates this, when, in simply identifying a particular spot, he calls it "the place where they ate bread *after the Lord had given thanks.*") He then broke the loaves in pieces and gave to the disciples for distribution. He afterward divided the fishes, and dispensed to each as much as each desired. They all ate and were filled. It was a miraculous feast; but, well considered, the feast that God multiplies to mankind in every year's harvest is not one whit less miraculous. This latter miracle is annually wrought before our eyes, and yet so out of our sight, that we blindly do not wonder at it. That miracle of the 5,000 fed plenteously from but five barley loaves and two fishes, seems to have been wrought with as little demonstration as is the yearly miracle of seeding and harvest. It is not told at what point the multiplication of quantity took place. Probably no one could have told; probably no one saw. We may conjecture that, in a manner not attracting attention, the loaves continued to furnish pieces for distribution, as long as those heavenly hands continued to break them; and similarly the fishes lasted for division to the people. There was some overflow and surplus of creative beneficence; but nothing was wasted. The Lord had all gathered up, and twelve baskets were filled with the fragments of remainder. The evangelists, all the four uniting here, tell the story and make no comment. The true comment is the story.

The immediate effect of this prodigious work was threatening in character. It incited the people to a movement which would compromise Jesus, and precipitate a catastrophe. They said, "This is he; let us make him king." Jesus accordingly at once hurried his disciples into the boat to return without him, or before him, to the other side, while he should himself disperse the multitude. These two things accomplished, the Lord went up into the mountain apart to pray. It was a crisis again. There night overtook him.

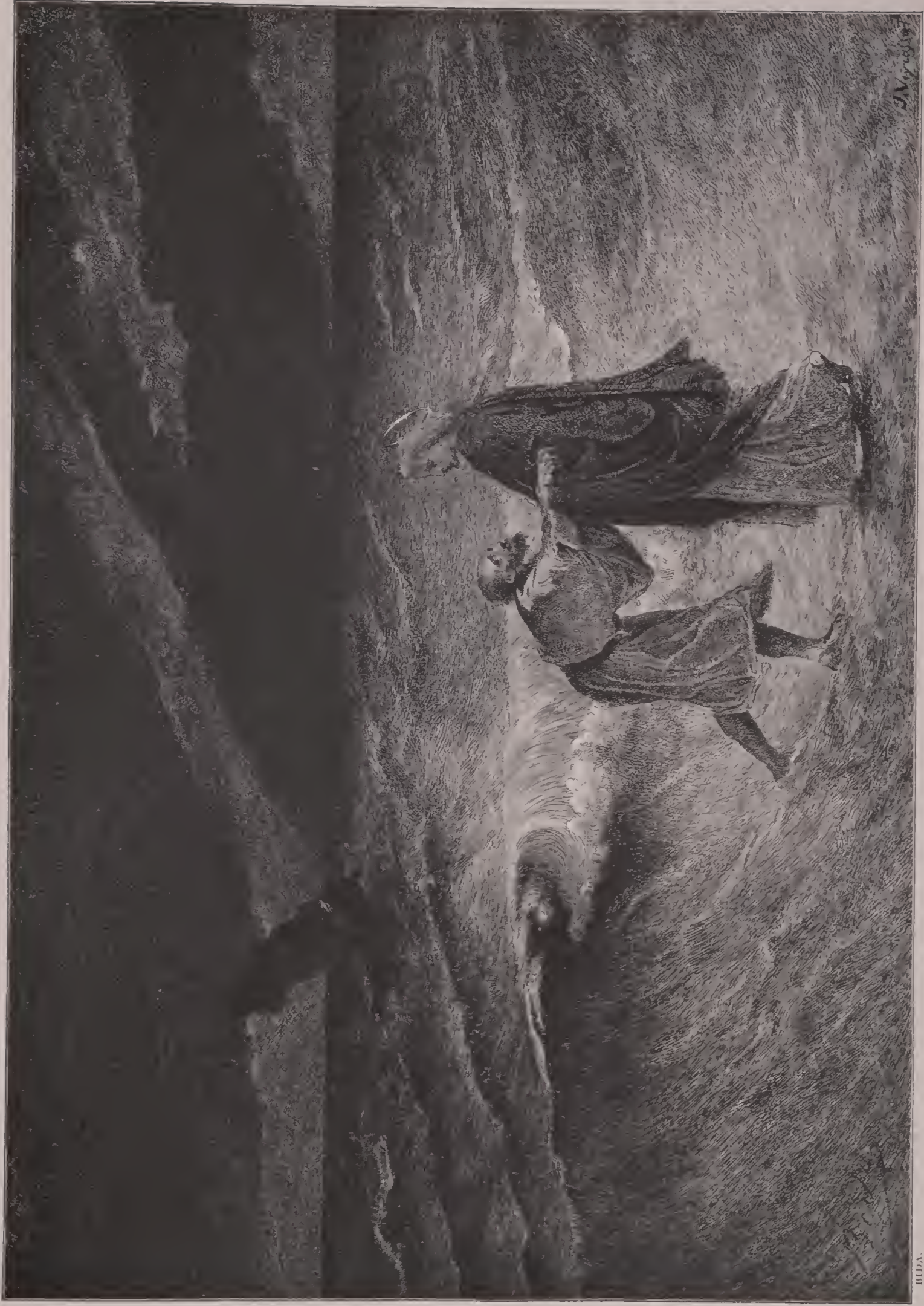
Meantime the disciples had trouble in making their transit by boat. They had head winds and there was a heavy sea. While they struggled with their oars, making little progress, they peered through the darkness and saw what alarmed them. It was the appearance of a

man walking on the waters. It was an "apparition"! They cried out with terror. That moving form approached them. But a voice answered their cry. It was a well-known voice, and the words were words of peace. "Be of good cheer," it said; "it is I; be not afraid." Peter responded: "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters." "Come," said Jesus. Peter ventured—a noble venture of faith. But his faith failed and he began to sink. "Lord, save me," he cried. Jesus gave him his hand and they went both of them up into the boat. Therewith the wind ceased, and "straightway the boat was at the land whither they were going," namely, Gennesaret. This, at first blush, might seem, as suggested, almost like a mere miracle of demonstration. But wisely considered it was not such. There was reason why the disciples should be sent on in advance of their Master, and there was reason why the Master should be left for that night season alone. Then there was reason why he should rejoin his disciples; and the way he took was the one practicable way. Yet once more in Gennesaret (where Capernaum was situated), the familiar scene is repeated of the Lord besieged with multitudes in need of his healing hand; and once more with lavish bounty he showers round his gifts. His very garments dripped medicinal balm whenever they were touched—if it was a hand of faith that touched them.

The feeding of the 5,000 had its sequel in a teaching occasioned by it. This John only reports. The multitude that had been filled by the dispensations from that miraculous hand, came back on the morrow and, finding the wonder-worker gone, took boats that had just been brought from Tiberias to the place, and hastened in them across to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. "Rabbi," they wonderingly said to him, "when camest thou here?" They had seen the disciples go away the evening before, without their Master, in the only boat then available; and the flotilla from Tiberias they themselves had used, and that certainly had not brought him. It was a question of idle, perhaps half-ashamed, curiosity, to cover the real motive with which they had now sought Jesus again. His answer did not gratify them; but it laid bare in their souls what they would willingly have concealed. "Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled. Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life." It was not the purpose of Jesus, or it was only a subordinate, a tributary, purpose of his, to bring material comfort into the world. His feeding of the multitude was, in his own view, less a work of beneficence, than a "sign." They missed the true advantage, who took, indeed, the food provided but failed to take the meaning. It was spiritual, it was eternal, not bodily, not temporal, good, that the Son of Man came chiefly to bring.

The people caught at Christ's word, "Work," and asked a sanctimonious question: "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus' reply was a point-blank surprise and rebuke to their spirit of unbelief in himself: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." With incredible insensibility to the implication bound up in what Jesus had thus said, they pressed their prurient plea for a fresh wonder from his hand. One almost blushes for them now with involuntary shame, to read with what open effrontery, with what flagrant impudence, they hinted at a repetition by him of his miracle of the day before: "What then doest thou for a sign, that we may see, and believe thee? what workest thou? Our fathers ate the manna in the Wilderness; as it is written, He gave them bread out of heaven to eat."

It was hopeless to deal with such a spirit as that. Cavilers, not learners, were before him, and Jesus would drive them away, rather than vainly try to win them. He propounds his hardest doctrines, and he propounds them in the most repellent form: "I am the bread of life. . . . The bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world." It was the miracle of the feeding that suggested the figure under which he thus taught; but what he thus taught was the profound, mysterious truth of his own bloody sacrifice of himself



JESUS AND ST. PETER ON THE SEA.

BIDA.

for the life of mankind. He was to be believed in, as constituting such a vicarious sacrifice; so was he to become, not to the body, but to the soul, a food nourishing the partaker to eternal life. It was a stumbling doctrine, a rock of offense. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" murmured the Jews, in stubborn unbelief. Jesus did not make it easier for these hearers. "*Except,*" he said, "ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves." By this time, the scene had got itself transferred to the synagogue in Capernaum. The sifting effect of such teaching from Jesus made itself felt even among his disciples. "This is a hard saying," many of them murmured to themselves, "who can hear it?" Jesus knowing this, condescended to intimate to them that his words were not to be taken literally, but were spirit and were life. "But there are some of you," he added sadly, "that believe not."

What he had manifestly aimed at in these teachings, came to pass. His following was diminished in number. So many, indeed, of his disciples went back to walk with him no more, that the Lord turned to his twelve, and said, "Would ye also go away?" One cannot help feeling the question to be full of pathos. Did a sense of despondency weigh at that moment too heavy on the human heart of the Lord? If so, it must have been a relief when Peter made his noble reply: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." If ever words from man were welcome succor to Jesus, welcome and needed, it must have been then. But there was a hidden pang in his bosom that no words from any could cure. What that pang was, Jesus testified when he said, "Did not I choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Only twelve, they *chosen*—they chosen by *himself*—and one a devil! Searching words! Well for Judas had they gone to his heart, had they even sifted him then and there out of the number of the disciples! But the admonition, meant to save, if he would be saved, did not reveal to Judas his own true self; or not so as to make him savingly recoil.

The Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes seem to have been in a chronic state of mental disturbance concerning Jesus. They had delegations of their number in constant, or in frequent, attendance on this Galilean teacher, to watch him, to gather evidence, and to make report. Such a delegation now finds occasion of cavil in the fact that Jesus' disciples neglected certain ceremonial washings enjoined by tradition. Jesus pointed out that the inside of a man was the true seat of that man's purity or defilement. The disciples, in their simplicity, tell their Master that this teaching of his has offended the Pharisees. Their Master startled them by saying, "They are blind guides; let them alone." But even Peter, though not like the Pharisees offended, had, like them, not understood. "Declare unto us the parable," he said. The Lord was for an instant cast down. "Are ye also," he asked, "even yet without understanding?" And then he explained what to us now needs no explanation, saying, "Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man."

It was fully proved that not by "signs," and not by teaching, could that generation be redeemed from themselves. The Wonder-worker, the Teacher, must become Redeemer by blood, if the world was to be saved. It was only by being "lifted up" on the cross, that Jesus could "draw all men unto him." Still, the hour was not yet come for that; and the Lord will meantime, forsaking finally the familiar field of his labors in Middle Galilee, visit the regions to the north, skirting the borders of the Gentiles. This will interpose an interval of comparative rest, rest by retirement and change. And there must be at least a few souls there who will know the day of their visitation. Yes, and one of those few will be a heathen woman, to whom it shall be given to contribute an incomparable lesson of humility and of faith to all coming generations of mankind.

CHAPTER XI.

TWICE NORTHWARD IN PURSUIT OF SECLUSION.

A CERTAIN portion of Upper or Northern Galilee early acquired the name of "Galilee of the Gentiles." This was from the fact that, having in Solomon's time been ceded to Hiram, king of Tyre, as a consideration for services rendered by that monarch to the Jewish sovereign, it drew to itself a comparatively large population of Gentile origin. Into this region Jesus now repairs.

From beyond the borders of Israel, a Canaanitish woman—"a Syrophœnician," one evangelist calls her—made her way to Jesus. She, of course, had a request to prefer. She preferred it in terms betokening some knowledge on her part of Jewish ideas. "Have mercy on me," she cried, "O Lord, thou Son of David!" It was mercy on herself that she invoked; and yet it was for another than herself that she pleaded. It was for one dearer than herself. She was a mother; and she prayed on behalf of a child, her daughter. That daughter, a "little" daughter, was grievously vexed with a demon. Jesus met her as there is no record that ever he met other before. He met her with absolute silence.

But the suppliant was not so to be baffled. She had recourse to the disciples, who seem to have been by themselves at this moment, apart from their Master. She clamored so that they, for very weariness of her, took up intercession in her behalf. They could not bear the din of her supplications. They came to Jesus, she probably following hard after them. "Send her away," they said. This was not so heartless on their part as it seems; for they used a Greek idiom which meant, Grant her request that we may be rid of her, "She crieth after us," they complained. "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," was Jesus' reply. Whether the woman heard this, does not appear; but she flung herself down at Jesus' feet, in the worship due from an inferior to a superior, and said, "Lord, help me." Importunate prayer may be very frugal in words. The Lord's reply, for he spoke now, was in form very repellent, even hardhearted. "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." That seemed to rate this suppliant woman with outcast dogs. There must have been a quality, discernible to faith, in the tone and spirit of the speaker, that graciously belied what he said. The woman was happily equal to the occasion and to her own need. "Yea, Lord," she began. This did not assent to the Lord's apparent repulse, gently gainsaid it rather. "O yes, it is meet," it seemed to plead; "for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." It was as if she had said, "I am willing to take my place with the dogs, if thou wilt have me; but even so, drop me a crumb as to a dog crouched under its master's table." The Lord was fairly overcome; surprised, one might almost say, into a burst of glad admiration. He had carried his test to its utmost bound, and the woman had borne it triumphantly. "O woman," said Jesus, "great is thy faith: be it done unto thee, even as thou wilt." "And her daughter was healed from that hour."

Jesus had aimed at retirement in making this northern excursion. Mark says, "He entered into a house [some hospitable friend's house, probably], and would have no man know it. And he could not be hid." The case of the Syrophœnician woman's daughter no doubt became known, and the fresh notoriety resulting drove the Savior to withdraw still farther northward. He made a wide circuit. He visited Sidon first; then, in his roundabout homeward way, traversing the district called Decapolis, he came back to his favorite Sea of Galilee on its eastern side. Here, the customary scenes of healing repeat themselves, in number too great to be separately described. A multitude was fed again, the circumstances being much the same as on the former occasion. Four thousand (instead of 5,000) men, besides women and

children, were this time supplied with food by a multiplication of seven loaves (instead of five) and a few small fishes. The fragments remaining over filled seven baskets (instead of twelve). These details of difference are interesting as attesting the sobriety and the careful truth of the two narratives.

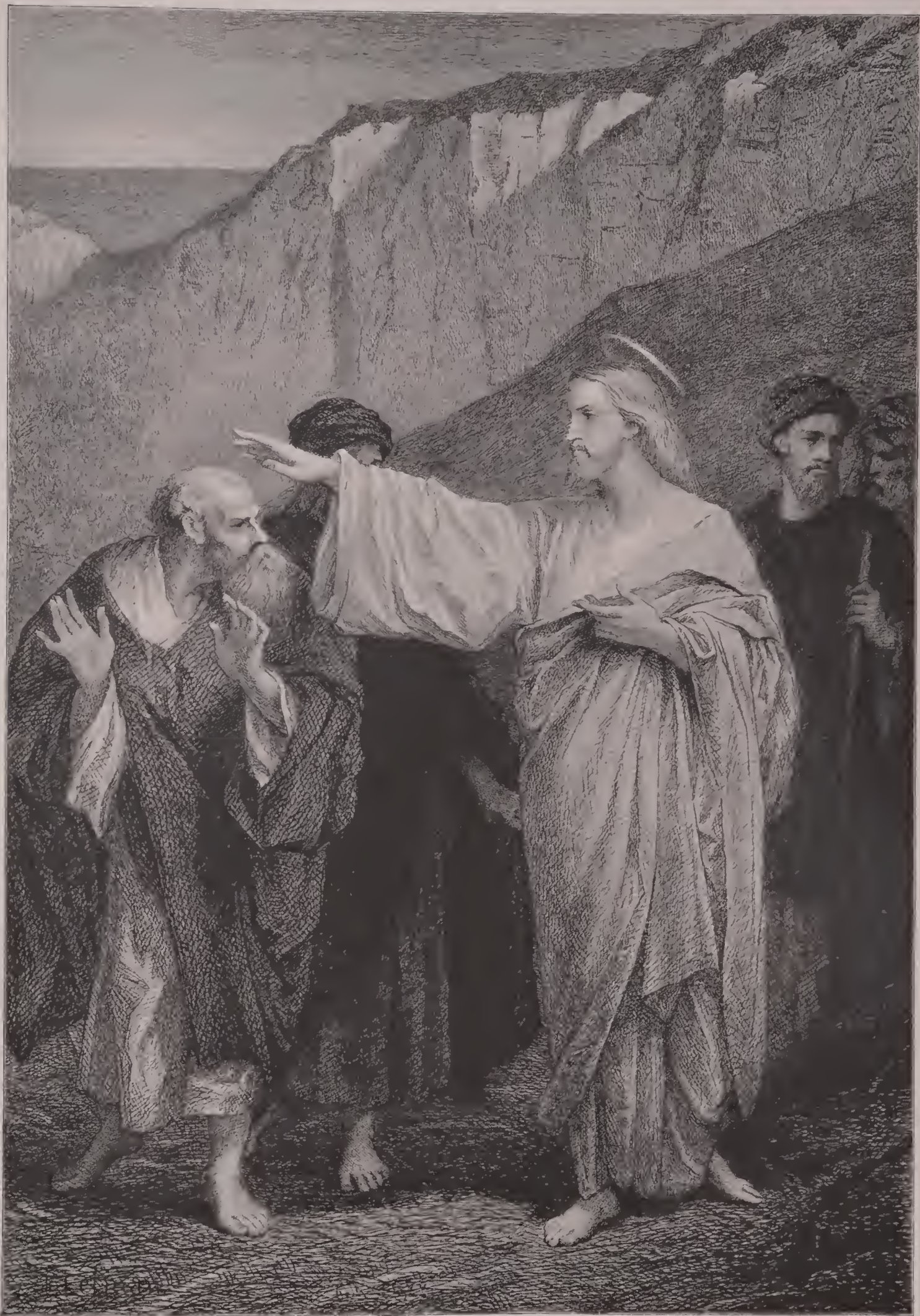
As on the previous occasion of miraculous feeding of the multitude, Jesus took care to dismiss and disperse the throng. He then, in a boat with his disciples, went to the opposite side of the lake. Here the Pharisees harried him with their insulting demand of a "sign" from heaven. They perhaps wanted a "sign" given them under conditions which they should themselves prescribe; a sign that would satisfy their unbelieving tests—that is, the tests of the scientific spirit of that day. Jesus sighed deeply in his spirit and declared that there should be no sign given to that generation. And once more he retreats to refuge in his boat, and vibrates back yet again to the other side of the lake. On the way, he warns his disciples against the "leaven" of the Pharisees. Those strange disciples misunderstood him. They took him literally, They said, It is because we have no bread—they having in fact but a single loaf on board. "Do ye not yet understand?" wearily asked the Lord. He finally made them perceive that he meant the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

It is noteworthy that both Matthew and Mark, in recording the Savior's return, after his encounter with the Pharisees and Sadducees, to the eastern side of the lake, say "he left them,"—that is, the Pharisees and Sadducees. What with the persecutions of these enemies, on the one hand, and the dangerous enthusiasms of the people on the other, he was in sore need of escape and relief—till his "hour" should come. This escape and relief he sought in another excursion to the north.

A public man of our time needing retirement and rest has always open to him some available recourse. He can take ship and flee across sea; or he can take a train and in a few hours penetrate to some recess of country withdrawn from popular approach and observation. Far otherwise was it in his day with Jesus of Nazareth. There was no accessible refuge for him from the persecuting pursuit of his own notoriety. He might travel, but he must travel on foot; and he could not travel fast enough or far enough to outrun the people that would spring up everywhere at his heels to follow him with their importunities for help. He had no sooner set out once more, his face turned northward again, in recoil from the contact and offense of the Pharisees and Sadducees, than he was met at Bethsaida by the case of a blind man to be healed. Jesus cannot resist the pathetic appeal of that need and that faith. He, however, takes the blind man by the hand, and, in the way of such precaution as is possible against the publicity that he seeks to avoid, leads him out of the village. He there spat on his eyes and asked him, "Seest thou aught?" That was as if the Healer did not expect the cure to be at once perfect. The blind man said he beheld men as trees walking. Next came a touch of the healing hand on his eyes, which completed the restoration of sight. Jesus then sent the man, no longer blind, away to his home, with the charge, "Do not even enter into the village." He thus did what he could to keep the man from temptation to publish his experience and his cure.

The Bethsaida here meant is the village so named on the eastern side of the lake. There was a village of the same name on the western side. But Jesus was now on his way northward to Cæsarea Philippi, where was the Fountain of the Jordan. The spot is picturesque, the fountain itself being one of the most striking features of Palestinian scenery. But no note is made by the evangelists to warrant our supposing that the Savior paid particular heed, here or elsewhere, to the romantic or beautiful aspects of nature. In mere sentiment, æsthetic or other, Jesus seems to have indulged very sparingly.

But while they fared along, he and his disciples, he asked them a question such as, from any other than he, might seem to savor of a somewhat morbid self-consciousness, even vanity.



BIDA.

JESUS GIVES PETER HIS CHARGE.

He asked them, "Who do men say that I am?" They reported; and then he asked them, "But who say ye that I am?" True to his character, Peter was the one to reply. "Thou art the Christ of God," he said. This no doubt was what the Lord wished to elicit; and it was in preparation for eliciting it that he had begun with the question first asked. He however, strictly "charged them" and "commanded them" to tell it to no man.

To Peter he now spoke words that have been made the subject of unending discussion. Jesus saw that Peter must have got his perfectly clear discernment of the true person and character of his Master, by direct revelation from God himself. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah!" he impressively said; "Bar-Jonah" meaning Son of Jonah, or of John. He then added: "And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

What do these words mean? Roman Catholics say, That Jesus made Peter prince of the apostles and head of the church, in fact, vicar of God. On this interpretation for its corner stone, the institution of the papacy is founded. Protestants explain the words variously; but always, of course, in a sense not admitting the claim of Roman Catholicism. In seeking the truth on this topic, one ought to consider that the binding and loosing power, whatever that is, here given to Peter, is elsewhere given by Jesus in the same words to all the apostles in common. "Binding" and "loosing" are customary Jewish expressions for "prohibiting," on the one hand, and "permitting," on the other. The thing, therefore, that Jesus here meant was, to bestow on Peter (and, with him, on all his fellow-apostles) the privilege and the responsibility to teach authoritatively in his name what was right and what was wrong; in other words, what was "loosed" or permitted, and what was "bound" or prohibited. Peter's name, meaning "rock," naturally suggested to Jesus the figure of building, when he spoke of his church. Peter had just made the first absolutely clear and positive confession of Jesus as Christ that ever was made by man. He, therefore, might well be represented as beginning the Church of Christ; in other words, as constituting, in this sense, its corner stone, that stone being the one first laid when a building is erected. On Peter, therefore, as on the first stone laid in it, Jesus would found and rear his church. Such seems to be the obvious, the natural, the sufficient and exhaustive, meaning of the figure in which Jesus here expressed himself, when he declared that on the rock Peter his church should be built.

The giving to Peter of the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" — what does that import? Perhaps no more than a repetition, in a kind of Hebrew parallelism, of the idea already conveyed. But let us inquire. And first, What is to be understood by the expression, "kingdom of heaven"? "Kingdom of God" is an alternative expression of the same idea. To begin with, it does *not* mean a place; in other words, it is not equivalent to "heaven." The chief element in the idea of any kingdom is a community of persons who are subjects of a king. Human souls obedient to God as King constitute the "kingdom of God" on earth. It is the earthly counterpart of what exists above; it is, in this sense, the "kingdom of *heaven*." Of this kingdom, anybody becomes a member who simply obeys God as King. This community of souls obedient to God, constituting, as such, God's kingdom, may be conceived under the figure of a city with gates. Whoever possesses the secret of obedience to God, has, simply in virtue of that qualification, the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Is there good reason to believe that the keys of the kingdom were given to Peter in any other sense than that in which they are given to everyone who does as Peter did, namely, sees and acknowledges Jesus in his character of the Christ of God? Peter, however, by his *priority* in confession, might, in the important sense of first example, be accounted the one to open the gates of the kingdom of heaven to all who should afterward enter, as he entered, by the way of obedience to Jesus

Christ the Vicegerent of God. If we were to seek any sense for the words different from that already proposed, we should find a very natural one in understanding that Jesus meant to accord to Peter the privilege of opening the Gospel dispensation; as in fact he did, for the Jews on the day of Pentecost, for the Gentiles in his interview with Cornelius.

The saying is a remarkable saying; but the foregoing interpretation is submitted in full conviction on the part of the writer that it fairly meets the demands of the language employed by the Lord. The allusion to *hades* is too noteworthy to be overlooked. The meaning probably is that the kingdom of heaven shall continue to exist, undisturbed by the circumstances of death, whether the death of its Founder or the death of its subjects; in short, that it takes in not only this world but, not less, also, the world to come.

This whole passage of conversation between Christ and his disciples seems to mark a transition in the direction and aim of his teaching. From this time onward, he addresses himself, not exclusively, but mainly, to the task of intimate instruction to the inner circle of his followers. The understanding between himself and them is assumed to be complete; and he now begins to unfold to them certain of the truths more difficult to receive concerning himself. Of these, chief was the fact that he must go to Jerusalem, must there suffer many things at the hands of his enemies, and finally be put to death. He always added that the third day he should rise again. Matthew, himself one of the twelve, says that he "*from that time began to show*" these things to his disciples. This language implies that he foretold his own death and resurrection—not simply once, or twice, or thrice, but repeatedly. We have the record of many repetitions of this momentous announcement; but the repetitions were evidently far more numerous than are the separate notes of them. Jesus, therefore, fully committed himself to the prediction, not only that he should be killed, but that in three days he should rise from the dead. Indeed, he may be said to have staked everything upon that future fact. If the fact failed, if he did not rise, as he said he would rise, from the dead, nothing could possibly save his credit among men. He would necessarily rank, and he would well deserve to rank, as, at the best, a weak and misguided enthusiast; as, at the worst, a conscious and incredibly foolish impostor—an impostor who needlessly himself provided an inevitable speedy exposure of his own false pretensions.

Peter, alas, seems to have been lifted up unduly by the extraordinary things that Jesus had just said to him in the presence of his fellow-apostles. He prepared for himself a prompt rebuke and humiliation from his Master as signal as had been his late commendation. Peter took it upon himself to give his Master a point of advice and remonstrance! The idea of the Lord's suffering shame and death, and of his announcing this future as in store for himself precisely at the moment when he, Peter, might fairly be expecting great things to his own profit from his new dignity in holding the keys of the kingdom soon to be established—such an idea was too great a downfall of ambition and hope. Peter "took" Jesus and "began to rebuke him." The misguided man must have made a somewhat formal thing of it. He meant to have it impressive. It became, indeed, impressive, but in a way, and in a sense, that Peter little expected. Jesus turned and gave a significant look toward the circle of waiting disciples. It was a crucial moment for Peter. But the suspense could not have been felt so severely as were the words that followed. The Lord said to Peter: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God but the things of men." This, to the apostle that had lately been so distinguished with praise! It was a cruel fall—all the more cruel that it was so richly deserved—to the pride and presumption of Peter. Mark makes no mention of the extraordinary praise addressed by Christ to Peter; while the terrible reproof thus visited upon the offending apostle is spread out at large on his record. This circumstance becomes remarkable to us, and most instructive, when we consider that Peter was probably himself the source and authority to his nephew Mark for the writing of his Gospel.

Peter had at length grown such in character that he was not careful to have his own glory commemorated, while willing to let appear his own folly and pride, and therewith the awful rebuke that these earned for himself from the Master.

Thus far the conversation has, on the present occasion, been strictly between Jesus and his apostles. Now Jesus calls the multitude near, and to them, together with the apostles, says: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself [this doubtless was a further rebuke to Peter, besides being an admonition to all who, as Peter had just done, regard, instead of disregarding, self], and take up his cross and follow me." "To take up the cross," must, to those who had just heard Jesus foretell his own death, have meant nothing less than to be willing to incur crucifixion — as the Master himself was. Hard terms of discipleship? Yes; but there were gracious promises in paradox annexed: "Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it"; "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds." These were astounding assertions. Jesus added another not less astounding: "Verily I say unto you," he declared, in his own solemn manner, "there be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." There was to follow soon an event which those three favored apostles who were permitted to witness it would find well adapted to confirm their faith, if their faith had, perhaps, been in any degree staggered by sayings from Christ of such incomprehensible, such magnificent, such momentous import.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

THE event just alluded to occurred after an interval of six days. The three chosen apostles present to witness it were Peter, James, and John. These Jesus takes with him, and goes up into a solitary mountain of great height. What mountain this was, we cannot with certainty determine. The fact that Jesus, with his disciples, was apparently still in the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi, makes it probable that it was a part of Mount Hermon rising directly from this point. In that lofty and lonely spot, there was shown to those witnesses a spectacle such as they could see, indeed, with dazzled eyes and minds in ecstasy; but such as neither they, nor any mortal, could describe. It was a momentary glimpse on earth of heavenly glory. Jesus prayed; and as he prayed he became a different person in appearance. He was transfigured before the apostles. His face shone as the sun, and his raiment became white and glistening, like apparel of pure light. He was "robed in dazzling immortality." Nothing could be imagined better adapted to convey to those beholders an idea of the proper majesty of that veiled incarnate God, with whom, not knowing him, they had walked and talked so long.

It was not addressed to the eye alone. Two glorified visitors from the unseen world appeared and held audible converse with the transfigured Son of Man. These two were Moses the giver, and Elijah the restorer, of the law. Many ages before, they had each of them passed away from the world of men in a mystery; and now in a mystery they both returned again, to show themselves for a moment, and disappear. We know what was the subject of their conversation. It was the decease which Jesus was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. The three apostles were all of them bewildered and afraid; but Peter felt that he must say something, and not well knowing what it ought to be, nor indeed what it was when he said it, he ventured on this: "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." This was at the point of time when the

two visitants to Jesus were in the act of parting from him. While he was yet speaking, a tabernacle not made with hands, a tabernacle from God, overshadowed them. It was a shadow, not of darkness, but of light; a "bright cloud," it is called by Matthew. But it no doubt had the effect of darkness upon those unaccustomed eyes, which must have been blinded by the glory. Already afraid when that cloud, "dark with excessive bright," enveloped them, the disciples fell on their faces quite overcome with fear when out of the cloud came a voice, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Jesus came and touched the fallen disciples and said, "Arise, and be not afraid." What reassuring words from One so attested from heaven! The disciples suddenly looked round about. They saw no one any more, save Jesus only. Luke tells us that the three apostles were heavy with sleep during some part of the time occupied by this incident. This, with other indications, suggests that the transfiguration occurred at night. The occasion was perhaps one more of those night vigils of prayer which the Lord so frequently observed. We are at liberty to suppose that the conversation between Jesus and his visitors may have been somewhat prolonged. Perhaps those immortalized human brethren of his were commissioned from God to make more clearly known to the Suffering Messiah what awaited him at Jerusalem. Jesus charged Peter, James, and John not to reveal what they had thus seen and heard. They obediently held their peace — "in those days"; the silence enjoined need last only till the resurrection of Jesus. While they were coming down from the mount, the Master spoke again of the rising from the dead which was to follow his suffering and death in Jerusalem.

From the mind of one at least among the witnesses of the transfiguration, the vividness of the vision never faded. Long after, Peter, in his so-called Second Epistle, wrote thus in allusion to what on that occasion he saw: "We did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard come out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount." Such language is proof, if proof were needed, of the confirming effect produced on his faith by that experience of Peter's. But not on Peter alone did the impression of the transfiguration of Jesus thus deeply and brightly abide. John doubtless had this revelation in mind when he wrote: "We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father." Such testimonies well deserve a high place among the still-living and ever-imperishable evidences of Christianity.

From the mount of transfiguration to the levels at its foot, was a descent and transition; but it feebly symbolized the abrupt difference between the glory of what the three disciples had just beheld, and the sorrow of what was awaiting their return to the plain. This was a case of human misery in one of its most distressing forms. The disciples had tried and had failed to relieve it; and the scribes were pressing them with questions. Jesus cured the sufferer, who was a boy, and gave him back to his father. "All were astonished at the majesty of God." This descriptive note from Luke stimulates the imagination to conceive that some peculiar transfiguration still remained in effect, to make the port and appearance of Jesus majestic, after his experience on the mount. It would seem also as if the glimpse of his native heaven enjoyed by him there, made the renewed contact of earthly imperfection and sin unusually hard to endure. He had perhaps never before evinced a spirit so nearly approaching impatience, as when now, upbraiding his disciples for the lack of faith that had occasioned their failure, he exclaimed, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear you!" If he felt so concerning his disciples, what must have been the trial of spirit endured by the sinless Redeemer in encounter with his unbelieving, gainsaying, persecuting, murderous enemies!

CHAPTER XIII.

INTERMISSION.

AFTER the transfiguration, with its sequel and contrast in that scene at the foot of the mountain, there intervened a period, of uncertain length, during which the preaching activity of Jesus was intermitted. It was apparently a time of comparative retirement and rest to the Lord. He had, in a measure at least, succeeded in veiling himself from the public. It may well be that, after such innumerable cures effected by him, there did not remain in the land cases enough of crying physical need, accompanied with the requisite faith, to keep up popular enthusiasm of importunity and of curiosity to the height of excitement that now for many months had prevailed. Jesus could devote himself to the quiet instruction of his apostles.

The first thing mentioned in the course of this private instruction, was another return, on the Teacher's part, to the topic of his own impending sufferings, death, and subsequent resurrection. It is pathetically noticeable that he taught these things to his disciples much as if he felt that he would be teaching in vain. He said: "Let these words sink into your ears: for the Son of Man shall be delivered up into the hands of men." And indeed he did teach to a great extent in vain. Concerning this very communication, Luke says: "They understood not this saying, and it was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it: and they were afraid to ask him about this saying." And yet how explicit he had made it! Mark gives it more fully than Luke, adding: "And they shall kill him, and when he is killed, after three days he shall rise again." What could be plainer? And they did understand enough to be, as Matthew says, "exceeding sorry." But it needed the actual accomplished fact to make the Lord's meaning fully clear. If the fact had not followed, the prediction would of course never have been understood; nor, also of course, would it ever have been recorded. It testifies to the unalterable sanity and sobriety of spirit, steadfastly maintained at this time by Jesus against the naturally exalting effect of an experience on his part like the transfiguration, followed by that easy and absolute triumph of his over the powers of evil at the foot of the mountain, that, while the awe of astonishment at him was still casting unbroken its spell on the minds of observers, he himself, on the other hand, was capable of calmly discoursing on the subject of the unspeakable agony and shame that awaited him.

Another proof of the same equipoise in him was his conduct when the question of the "half-shekel" came up. The half-shekel was a tax for the temple, payable in Hebrew coin only, and due from every male Israelite of age. The collectors asked Peter, "Doth not your Master pay the half-shekel?" Peter said, "Yes." But when he came into the house, Jesus was beforehand with him in speaking on the subject. Claiming to be justly exempt on the ground of his divine sonship, he yet at the same time paid the tax, and so paid it as to show his own inherent right to be free. He bade Peter go to the lake—he was now at Capernaum—and cast a hook for a fish. In the first fish's mouth, Peter should find a shekel, which would discharge both the disciple and the Master.

The twelve disciples were human. They were at once slow-witted in things of the spirit, and ambitiously eager, each one for preëminence. The idea of "kingdom," about which they heard so much and understood so little, turned their heads. They disputed among themselves which of them all was to be greatest in that kingdom. Jesus knew what was going on in their hearts, and he gave them a lesson, which, as effective as it was simple, has become immortal and universal in fame. He took a little child and set him by his side, and said, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Those disciples had been childish in their contention; they were to be childlike instead. Jesus took



JESUS CHRIST AND THE ADULTRESS.

the little child up in his arms as he said this, making a picture forever dear to the imagination, the memory, and the heart of mankind.

The instructions given by Jesus to his confidential disciples, during this period of comparatively secluded sojourn in Galilee preceding his final withdrawal from that region, must here for lack of space be left to be studied in the text itself of the Gospels where they are recorded. The object of this biography is rather narration, than interpretation or commentary. Priceless instructions they were, so simple in form, so profound in meaning, so sententious, so brief but so dense with suggestion—inexhaustible fountains of practical wisdom for the nurture and culture of the life of the soul. The eighteenth chapter of Matthew, for example, contains a rule of conduct from Christ for cases of disagreement arising between brother and brother, which, it may safely be said, would, if carried out in life, do more to transform the face of society than all the ethical and social wisdom of the world beside. And that instruction to Peter on the duty of forgiveness! "How often shall I forgive?" asked Peter. "Until seven times?" he added; seeing already perhaps in Jesus' eyes a meaning which he made haste to meet by putting the requisite number, as he thought, high, at "seven times." "Not until seven times, but, until seventy times seven," said Jesus. He then, by way of enforcement, added his parable of the debtors, with that solemn conclusion: "So [that is, in strict, stern justice, devoid of mercy] shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."

John tells us Jesus' reason for his sojourn in Galilee. "He would not walk in Judea, because the Jews [the Jewish rulers] sought to kill him." The same reason influenced him to lead his life as much as might be in quiet. He would not hasten on prematurely his "hour." The feast of tabernacles was approaching and Jesus' own brothers, then not believers in him (strange, and yet not strange!), prompted him to visit Judea and work miracles there. Judea was "the world" to those Galilean provincials, and Jesus ought to manifest himself to the world. Jesus calmly said, "My time is not yet come." He went, however; but in a quiet manner, to avoid publicity. The city was full of talk and rumor about Jesus. At the height of the feast, the Lord went into the temple, that is, into the temple inclosure, and there taught. Some said, "Is not this he whom they seek to kill?" The rulers were nonplussed. They sought to take Jesus; and they did not take him, though there he was openly before them. John explains why. "His hour was not yet come." That strange man, bearing that strangely guarded life, went on teaching. And officers, it seems, were sent to arrest him. They came back without their prisoner. "Why did ye not bring him?" the rulers disappointedly asked. "Never man so spake," was the officers' only reply. The story of the woman taken in adultery is not now regarded as belonging in the true text of the Gospel of John. This does not necessarily indicate that the story is false; but it is sufficiently doubtful for us to pass it here, though it teaches a lesson that seems characteristic of Jesus.

To this part of the life of Jesus pertain those passages of discourse—discourse become, through human perverseness, almost altercation—between Jesus and the hostile Jews, which are recorded in the eighth chapter of John. The paradox under which Jesus obscured his instructions to these resisting hearers, constitutes a striking example of his use of this method in teaching. Most majestic were the claims that he made for himself. They should have overawed the listeners; but the listeners were only exasperated by them. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad," said Jesus. "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" caviled the Jews. They, of course, put his age at the extreme limit of possibility, probably almost a score of years beyond the truth. Jesus said to them, with that divine phrase of his, confirming his words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." The Jews made their last reply by taking up stones to cast at him. But Jesus was hidden; and veiled from them he went out of the temple.

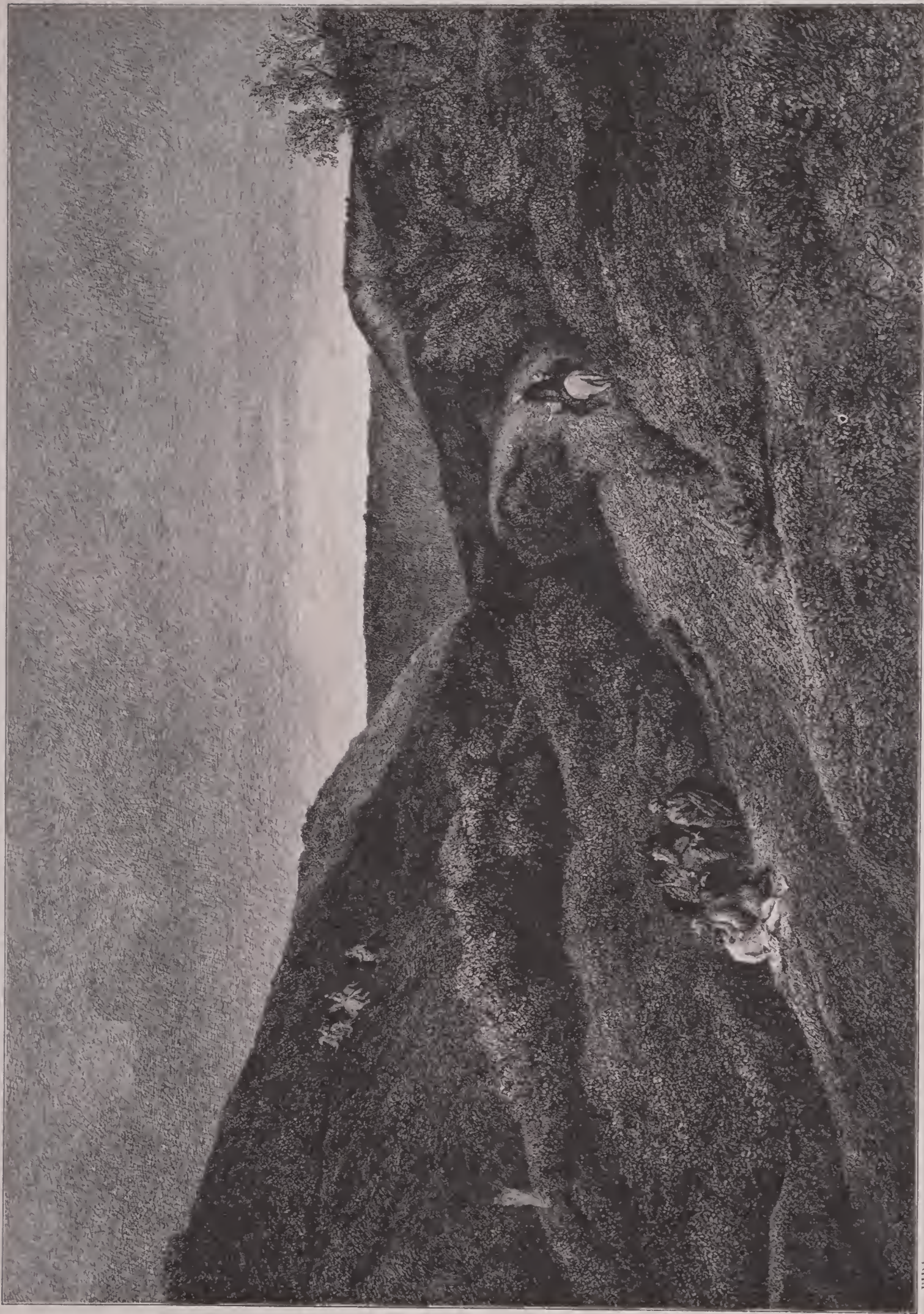
CHAPTER XIV.

TO GUESTSHIP AT BETHANY.

THE time at length arrived for the last farewell from the Lord to his home in Galilee. Jesus had perhaps returned thither from the feast of tabernacles; but if so, it was only to take leave of it now forever. A yearning prophetic spirit in him, a spirit of welcome for his end, urged him irresistibly on to Jerusalem and to the cross. "When the days were well-nigh come," Luke says, "that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." Great multitudes followed him, and once more, according to his former wont, he taught them. He also healed the sick along his way. It seems to have been at first in the Savior's mind to take his way through Samaria. In pursuance of this purpose, he despatched to a certain Samaritan village that he would naturally pass in his journey forerunners to prepare entertainment for himself and his disciples. The villagers refused him hospitality, for the reason that he was obviously bound to Jerusalem — as we here assume, for the observance of the feast of dedication. James and John had been styled by Jesus "sons of thunder." They now showed their fitness to bear the name. They said, "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven to consume them?" They got a rebuke for their answer. The Lord went with his disciples to another village. Not to have received such a guest was in itself a sufficient punishment for not receiving him. The "other village" was perhaps one on the Galilean border, not in Samaria. If such was the case, Jesus may now have taken a course on the line dividing Galilee from Samaria, traveling east till, having reached the Jordan, he crossed it into Perea. This furnishes a possible explanation of that expression in Luke, "he was passing through the midst of [that is, on the border line, between] Samaria and Galilee." It is right, however, to say that this conclusion is doubtful. Some painstaking students of the life of the Lord think that Jesus, notwithstanding this first repulse, continued his journey through Samaria; and that there was a subsequent general tour of ministry made by him "through the midst" of both Samaria and Galilee. It is a case in which no certain conclusion is possible.

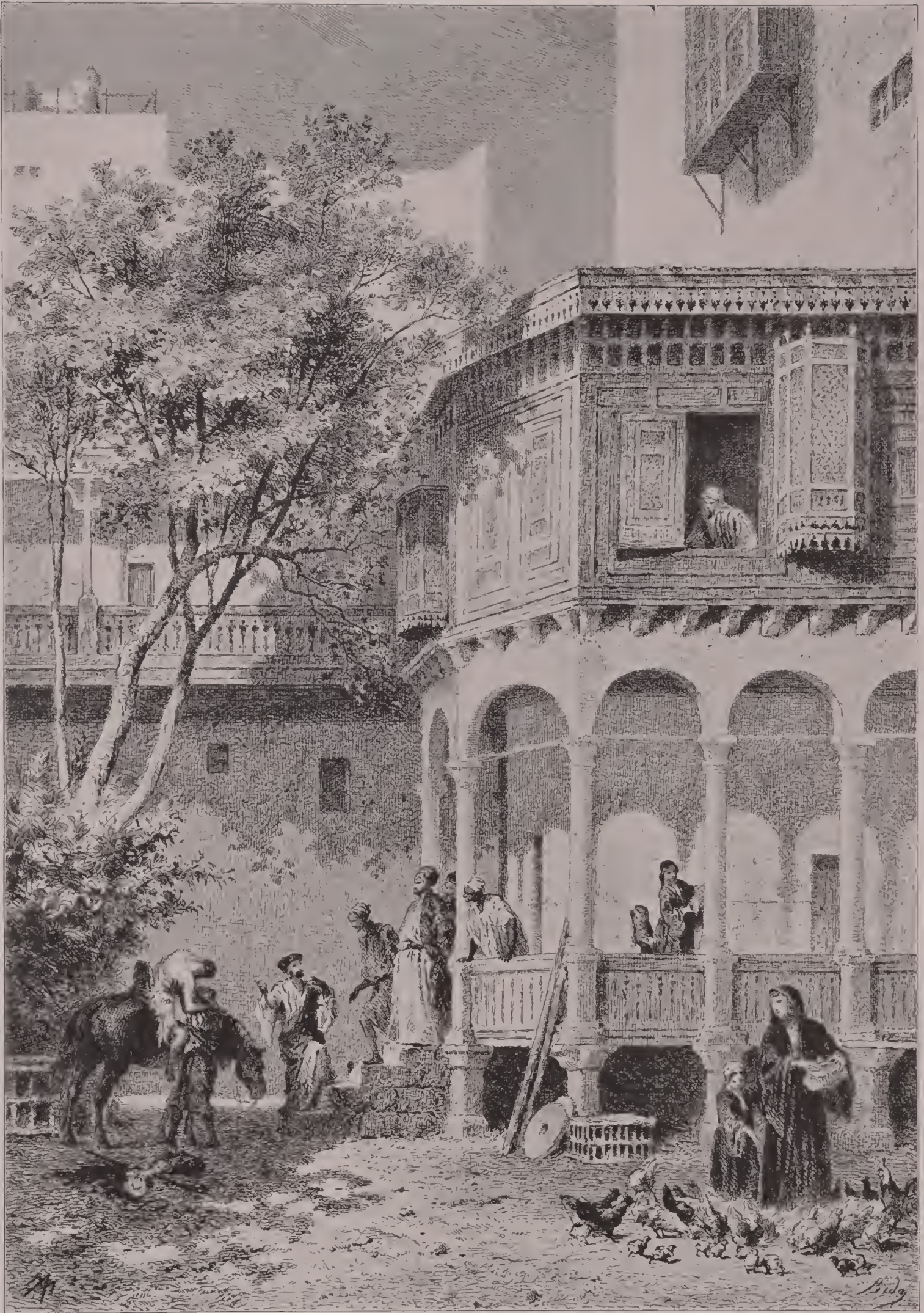
The Lord, with his train, was walking along the way, when a scribe offered to be of his company. Then it was that Jesus, having now forsaken his home in Capernaum, and being without prospect of other home to be his anywhere on earth, uttered that pathetic saying, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Perhaps the spurning that he had suffered from that inhospitable Samaritan village heightened in his human heart his sense of utter homelessness. The saying seems to have been meant to give the scribe warning how little was to be hoped for of earthly gain from following such a teacher. To another man, Jesus, with discrimination not accounted for, and perhaps not to be accounted for save by the supposition of sovereign choice on the speaker's own part, said, "Follow me." This man seemed to hesitate. "Suffer me first to go and bury my father," he said. "Leave the dead to bury their own dead," said the Lord, in his way of paradox; "but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God." *Nothing* was to take precedence of a call to duty coming from Christ. This principle was enforced a second time on the same journey by a similar reply given in a second similar case. His own absolute lordship over human souls could not have been more emphatically insisted upon than it was by Christ.

It was probably during the journey now in progress to Jerusalem, that Jesus selected out of the number of his disciples seventy in addition to the twelve apostles, and sent them forth to



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THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

preach. They were to visit in advance of himself the cities and villages through which he was about to pass. In the course of the instructions, resembling those to the twelve apostles, which he gave to these seventy missionary heralds of his, he entered upon a remarkable strain of retrospect and denunciation. He must have been reviewing in his own mind the cycle on cycle of wonderful works, ended at last, with which he had favored those cities of Galilee now left behind him perhaps forever. With the review, there swept over him the thought how little all had profited them. He began to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin!" And there follows that dread succession of "Woes!"—thrice dread, as issuing from those lips of grieved and indignant grace. "And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in thy name." "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven," the Lord, as in a trance of prophecy, replied. A glorious vision, to gladden the soul of the Redeemer—a vision of the future blending with the present; he saw the shaken principdom of this world cast out its prince. The joy of the seventy was responded to by joy also in the heart of the Master. It is like seeing a beam of pure light shot out of a gathering cloud that parts for an instant to let it forth, when one reads this record: "In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit." That Son's joy was toward his Father; it turned into thanks. Jesus said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes." He was perfectly well content, he was sympathetically glad, he was obediently thankful, that God had seen fit to give him his disciples of the lowly and the humble. And what encouragement still it remains to the lowly and the humble, that to them, not less than to the great of the earth, God through Christ loves to reveal himself and the wonders of his ways!

"Come unto me," so runs the rhythmic invitation from the lips of the Lord, making itself a lovely tune in whatever human language—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This follows immediately upon his giving of thanks to God that God's chosen were such as they were. "Take my yoke"—the yoke that I place, or the yoke that I wear, they are one and the same, it is the yoke of obedience—"take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." When ever did any other "meek and lowly" one so claim that grace of spirit? The claim itself would, in any other than Jesus, be its own refutation; but in him, it is so fit and so true that we have to rouse ourselves with an effort even to notice it as strange; and the result is that it does not seem strange after all. The great Teacher by paradox was himself the greatest of paradoxes. And what additional paradox is this fact concerning him, namely, that his paradoxical character (as well as his paradoxical method) indisputable as it is, yet so little appears! And—still another paradox!—the Meek and Lowly in heart is the same that majestically says, "I am the light of the world;" "No man cometh unto the Father but by me;" "I and the Father are one."

We do not know where it was, but at about this time, a lawyer, not named, stood up and asked the Master a prepared question. The lawyer's purpose was not teachably to learn, but captiously to test. "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" It was a good question, however ill asked. Jesus replied with a question in turn. "What is written in the law?" The lawyer made an excellent answer: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Nothing could be better as a summation in small of the whole law of God. Jesus accepted it, and told the lawyer: "This do and thou shalt live." The caviler was not satisfied to leave the matter in that state. He was a bright-minded man; and he saw a possible way to what he wanted in a little more cavil. "And who is my neighbor?" he asked. Jesus answered with the famous parable of the "Good Samaritan"; in which he taught that anybody near enough to us for us to help, is, in the spirit of the law of God, to be reckoned our "neighbor."



HOLMAN HUNT.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

The Lord has now reached, not Jerusalem, indeed, but a suburb of that city bearing a familiar name, name dear by sacred association to every Christian heart; it is the village of Bethany. Here a woman received him into her house; by that act of hospitality commencing perhaps a relationship to Jesus which has made her one of the best-known women in the world. The woman's name was Martha; and she had a sister called Mary, of whom it is said that she now "sat at the Lord's feet and heard his word." A glimpse most unexpectedly comes to us here of the inner domestic life of that household. Martha is so put about with her cares as hostess, that she is fain even to make appeal for relief to her Guest. Mary, her sister, did not help her so much as Martha thought she should! In her distraction of spirit, Martha almost blamed the Master himself. "Lord, carest thou not that my sister left me to serve alone?" How tenderly the Lord at the same time soothed that ruffled mind and chided her as in error and fault! There was affectionate admonitory repetition of Martha's name—one can almost hear through it the sympathetic undulation of the voice—"Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things." "Many things"—what does that expression mean? That Martha had a divided mind, oscillating uneasily between care for what was less important and attention to the chief matter of the soul? Or does it simply mean that Martha had too much housewife's bustling desire to make various provision for the table—to have a good assortment of different dishes to tempt the appetite? Jesus added: "But one thing is needful." If we adopt the latter of the foregoing interpretations, then Jesus will appear to be assuring Martha that a single dish would be ample provision. But Jesus added again: "For Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." This favors the higher, the allegorical, interpretation of the Savior's language. It seems to teach that Mary's posture as learner at the Lord's feet was better than Martha's excessive zeal to furnish that Lord with material hospitality. Perhaps Jesus saw, though delicately he refrained from saying, that Martha's ambition was in too great part self-regarding, animated with overmuch desire to appear well herself in her character of hostess.

Jesus will find here, in this home at Bethany, that comfort of love which his human heart will full sorely need during the days of trial for him now so near at hand. And he will richly overpay for all, not only with such society as no other guest ever brought to a human habitation; but also with a work of wonder in repair of bereavement, surpassing anything that even he before had anywhere wrought.

It is impossible, from the records supplied to us in the Gospels, to follow with any exactness the movements of Jesus belonging to this time, in their true relative order of occurrence. On some occasion, we know not what, perhaps it was while passing in one direction or the other between Bethany and Jerusalem—John simply says, "as he passed by"—Jesus saw a man blind from his birth. The disciples were prompted to ask a deep question. "Rabbi," they said, "who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" Jesus told them, Neither; and then, declining all speculative consideration of the point raised, addressed himself to a practical purpose befitting his character. His method, however, of procedure in the case—did that befit his character? Probably no one of us, antecedently, would, on his own judgment, have thought of choosing for Jesus such a mode of procedure as he here chose for himself. But whatever he did became, by the mere fact of his doing it, fit. He spat on the ground, and making clay of the spittle anointed the man's eyes with the unguent so produced. He then said to the man, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam." The man did so and came back seeing. A healing virtue in that earthen unguent, the blind man might perhaps easily have trusted. But why the pool of Siloam as a place for the bathing? The direction was at least a test of his faith. The cure was wrought on a sabbath day. It made a great stir among the Jewish rulers. Some officious persons seem to have taken the man to those self-appointed guardians of tradition, the Pharisees, as a testimony against Jesus. There was much bandying

of words between the man and his Pharisee inquisitors. He seems to have had a good share of mother wit and withal some true courage and faith. The final issue was both ill and well for the man. On the one hand, he believed in Jesus as the Son of God; but "they" "cast him out," that is, thrust him out of their company — a social exclusion that may, or may not, have been followed by the severer sentence of expulsion from the synagogue.

John reports for us various discourses of Jesus that must have been spoken at about the time of this healing; among these, that one in which he represents himself, now as the door to the sheepfold, and now as Shepherd of the sheep. In the course of it, he teaches the truths of his own vicarious death, and of his own victorious resurrection, saying, "I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." These words worked, no doubt, their intended effect; they sifted his hearers. Some believed, and some rejected; but more rejected.

It was winter, the winter before the spring that would see the end of that heavenly life on earth. Jesus, walking in the part of the temple which bore the name of Solomon's porch, was assailed by his enemies with a question which they evidently meant should precipitate an immediate issue. "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly." Probably they put their emphasis on the word "plainly." This implied that they had already well enough understood him to claim Messiahship. But they wanted something more unequivocal in form, something that would better serve as technical witness against him. Jesus said, "I told you, and ye believe not." He then appealed from his words to his works: "The works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me. But ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice." Another sifting sentence! The hostile Jews were stung to madness. Again they took up stones to stone him. This was on his uttering the words, "I and the Father are one." Jesus calmly said, "Many good works have I showed you from the Father; for which of these works do ye stone me?" But the Jews insisted it was not for his works, but for his blasphemy in making himself God. And the strife went on, till they once more sought to take him. "And he went forth out of their hand." *How*, they, though eyewitnesses, could not have told; and it is not explained by John. Still, Jesus seems to have thought it the part of wisdom to withdraw himself again for the present from these contacts with enemies. He retired beyond Jordan to the place where he was baptized by John the Baptist, and there took up his temporary residence. But he was not left to himself; for many came to him there. And many believed on him.



MARTHA AND MARY.

CHAPTER XV.

DISCOURSES UNDATED.

LUKE is alone in gathering together a number of discourses from the Lord, the exact place or the exact time of which he furnishes us no clue for determining. By comparison, however, of the other evangelists, we conclude that they belong to the journey through Perea (or through Samaria) to Jerusalem. "Journey," we say; for Luke in effect reduces to a single one the two or three journeys apparently indicated by his fellow-historians. This is no real conflict, it is only a difference, of representation. Luke simply regards the grand purpose with which Jesus set out for the last time, from his Capernaum home for Jerusalem as unifying all the Lord's movements following that, up to the moment when he finally entered the Holy City, not to go out again except to Calvary and the cross. The teachings now referred to, for the preservation of which we are indebted exclusively to Luke, we may call "discourses undated"; and under that title group them here for such notice as our space will allow.

One of them is a kind of parable. Regular parable it is not; it is rather a question with a supposition. The design of the instruction in it is to impress the importance of importunity in prayer. A man is represented as roused at midnight by application at his door from a friend who requests the loan of some loaves to entertain a guest of his unexpectedly arrived. The sleeper is lazily reluctant to get up, but he does so at last, rather than be dinned with continued beseeching. The argument is, that much more will indefatigable continuance in prayer prevail with God.

Again. Jesus is called by a Pharisee to dinner. The host of the occasion is scandalized to see that his guest neglects the customary ceremonial "washing" before the meal. The Pharisee must, one would suppose, have said something to invoke the severity of rebuke that he experienced from the Lord. For the Lord, guest though he was, opened a volley of indignant denunciation against the Pharisees as a class. He expressly involved his own host among them, his form of words being, "Woe unto you, Pharisees!" The language to which this forms at once prelude and refrain, is fearfully condemnatory. It is, in short, such language as is not reconcilable with the comity ordinarily required by the relation of host and guest. One justifies it only on the ground of a character in Jesus quite transcending the limits of common humanity. One of the lawyers present drew down the avalanche of rebuke on his own head with a deprecatory remark, "Master, in saying this, thou reproachest us also." Jesus launched thereupon into an almost heavier reprobation of the lawyers.

The alternative presented by such conduct on the part of Jesus, was a rigorous one. Either those who were thus denounced to their face would be overawed into submission, or they would be maddened to murderous hatred. The latter is what resulted. Jesus' enemies waited only for a suitable occasion to bring the power of the law to bear upon him. They had for months been exerting their ingenuity to entrap him in some overt expression that should make him liable to the penalty of death. They now did so with energy redoubled, in sequel to those stern utterances of his at the Pharisee's table. But the people crowding round him seem for the moment to have choked off, with mere multitude, these adversaries of Jesus. The Lord made as it were an appeal from the Pharisees themselves to the mass of the people. For he now denounced the Pharisees publicly. This at least seems to be the case; although Luke does indeed say that he addressed himself "to his disciples, first of all." "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy," he said. "Hypocrisy" is the acting of a part. The Pharisees were acting a part. They pretended to be moved by zeal for religion; they really were moved by zeal for themselves. That last calamity of the hypocrite, they succeeded perhaps

in imposing upon their own consciences ! A man of the crowd spoke up most inopportunistically. He wanted this all-powerful Teacher to intervene on his behalf in a matter of disputed inheritance. "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" severely asked the Lord. The emphasis is not on "me"; but on the words "judge" and "divider." The function of Jesus was not such as those words would imply. But the inopportunist interruption was in a sense opportunist. For it became the occasion of a parable from the Lord to illustrate the futility of worldly wealth. It is the parable of the poor rich man who was not "rich toward God." There followed those precious teachings to the disciples concerning a life freed from care through trust in God. These seem to be in part repeated from the Sermon on the Mount. A forewarning strain intermingles. The Lord looks forward to that crisis for Jerusalem which after his own death would involve in the general ruin many surviving from that very generation. "Be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not, the Son of Man cometh," was the solemn closing word.

Peter asked concerning this, whether it was for the apostles, or for all. We are thus warranted in conceiving that what the Lord from time to time said was occasionally meant for the special benefit of the circle of disciples immediately about him, though spoken openly in the hearing of the promiscuous multitude. Jesus did not answer Peter, except in terms to leave the point in some salutary doubt. The disciples, however, were given to understand that their own responsibility would be great and peculiar. "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required," the Lord said. The somber shadow of his own agony to come is cast by anticipation backward upon the Savior's spirit. He welcomes it with a tense and solemn joy: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" He is divided between two opposite inward constraints, one, a constraint to hasten on the coming inevitable hour; the other, a constraint to wait patiently till that hour was fully come.

It was by an impressive coincidence that, "at that very season" when he was occupied with such foretokenings at once of the doom overhanging himself and of the later doom overhanging Jerusalem, he should be told of certain Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. With that tragical incident, he associated another like it in melancholy character, namely, the recent killing of eighteen persons by the fall of a tower. "Think ye," said Jesus, "that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." Not "also" perish, but perish "likewise"; that is, with a similar violent destruction. It was a prophetic glance forward to that dreadful destruction of Jerusalem which was to occur less than forty years after. That actually did involve the whole population of the land crowded together within the city walls — *except* those who "repented," and heeded betimes the warnings of Jesus. No Christians perished in that unparalleled cataclysm of national calamity. On the same occasion, and with the same purpose, Jesus gave his parable of the barren fig tree, which was later to receive that striking enforcement by the parable in act of the fruitless fig tree blasted by a word from his mouth. Thus faithfully forewarned in vain, the sentenced Jewish nation would rush headlong and blindfold on its dreadful doom!

It will of course have been noticed that, in these later days of the Lord's earthly career, there seems to be a diminishing number of miracles to record. But his discourses were not wholly unaccompanied with the working of beneficent wonders. He was teaching in "one of the synagogues," and of course on a sabbath day. A woman was there whose body was so bowed together that she could not straighten herself. The Lord saw her and spoke to her: "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." He was not willing that it should be a word alone; it would be an added grace if he touched her. He touched her and immediately she was made straight. She glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue was indignant. He rebuked the Lord, indirectly, over the heads of the multitude — with a special aim, no doubt, at

the woman. "There are six days in which men ought to work," he said; "in them, therefore, come and be healed and not on the day of the sabbath." The Lord, in his turn, was indignant. "Ye hypocrites," he said, "doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall and lead him away to the watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the sabbath?" What eloquence there was in the use of these words, the words "bound" and "bond," to link together the case before him and the illustrative case supposed!

CHAPTER XVI.

INCIDENTS OF JOURNEYING.

IN the absence of times and places assigned for many of the incidents and many of the discourses recorded by the evangelists, it is, as has before been said, impossible to be sure of the true order and succession in which they occurred. We cannot determine with certainty how often, during the concluding twelve months of his life, Jesus went to Jerusalem and then withdrew from it to greater or less remove, before he entered the city for the last time. What here immediately follows from Luke occurred we know on some journey of Jesus toward Jerusalem as a goal. It may have been in Galilee, or it may have been in Perea; as will presently be seen, it was somewhere within the bounds of the jurisdiction of Herod.

"Are there few that be saved?" asked one. This inquirer was evidently a man whose conscience was alarmed by the solemn warning words of Jesus. Jesus replied in a way to keep that man's conscience wholesomely alarmed. But he made his reply general, by using the plural number. Indeed, the evangelist tells us that the reply was directed not to him, the inquirer, but "to them," the Lord's hearers in general. The purport of it was, "Strive to enter in by the narrow door." Salvation is not to be had without striving, and the way to it is narrow. It is a salvation not chiefly of this world, or of the present state; for the Lord expressly names Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, as sharers of it. To see these patriarchs and "all the prophets" safe within the kingdom of God, and "yourselves cast forth without"—that, Jesus awfully forewarns his hearers will be a doom to excite *the* weeping and gnashing of teeth—a lamentation, and a fruitless gesture of malignant despair, compared with which no other were worthy of mention. "And behold, there are last which shall be first and there are first which shall be last," is the cadence with which this teaching dies away on the awe-stricken ear of the hearer of whatever time. At this moment there come up certain Pharisees who perform an ambiguous office of friendship to Jesus. They tell him that he had better leave that part of the country, for Herod Antipas, the ruler, was bent on taking his life. The probability is that Herod used these Pharisees as his tools in the task of ridding his territories of the unwelcome presence of Jesus. That presence was felt as a disturbing power. The Lord's miracle-working threatened, so the tyrant doubtless thought, to foment sedition, to make Jesus the hero of a popular revolutionary movement that might unsettle his throne. Jesus saw through the subtlety of Herod. "Go and say to that fox," he replied, "Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I finish my course." This is perhaps to be understood quite literally, as meaning that Jesus would go on three days longer and no more, doing his wonders of blessing in Herod's dominion. He had no fear of perishing either before his time, or in any other place than the one appointed to him. It could not be, he said, that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem. That city had had, it should

continue to have, the melancholy distinction of being by eminence the great slayer of prophets. Then follows the first of those famous laments from the Lord over guilty and doomed Jerusalem. It is paternal, like the lament of David for Absalom.

Those machinating enemies of Jesus laid their snares for him in unexpected places. A ruling Pharisee asks him to dinner on a sabbath day. This is a second recorded occasion of the sort, and there were probably others, not recorded. The Pharisees were "watching" Jesus. There was present, perhaps by provision of the Pharisees as an occasion of test to the Lord, a man afflicted with dropsy. Jesus asks his enemies, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath or not?" They made no reply. He then, having healed the man and dismissed him, applied again that unanswerable argument, used before but appropriately modified now to suit the modified conditions, the argument of the ass or the ox found in need on a sabbath day. On that same occasion, observing the unseemly competition rife among the persons bidden, to secure each for himself a place of honor at table, Jesus drew from his observation a parable, which, with remarkable plainness of speech for a guest to fellow-guests, he applied directly to the company before him. It is, however, to be remarked that Jesus, perhaps by way of softening his lesson a little, speaks, not of a dinner, not even of a banquet in general, but of a wedding-feast. If Jesus, at any time of which there is record in the Gospels, indulged himself in delivering instruction not religious, not even directly ethical, in character, the present might seem such a case. It was at all events sound worldly wisdom that those self-asserting guests heard propounded that day from the Lord. The maxim deduced, "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted," has its fruitful application in the realm of the spirit. But one who humbles himself in order to be exalted, does not really humble himself. The fact is that in the spiritual sphere the self-humbling is itself the exaltation.

The Pharisee, his host, was also remembered by the Lord in the way of instruction adapted to his case. Perhaps Jesus noticed that the bidden guests of the day were persons of worldly condition such as not to stand in need of the social entertainment they were enjoying; while there were outside spectators present, like the dropsical man, for instance, to whom invitation to a bountiful feast would be boon indeed. "Bid to thy feast," he in substance said, "such guests as have it not in their power to recompense thee with return of invitation. Thou wilt so be earning recompense to be bestowed in the resurrection of the just." Upon hearing these things, a fellow-guest of the Lord sanctimoniously said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." This gentleman perhaps thought that he had thus very happily fallen into chord with the special peculiarity of Jesus as teacher; Jesus made much of the "kingdom of God" in what he had to say. Possibly the remark was even intended by its author to ease the tension of the situation at table. If so, he was probably surprised with the response that he evoked. It came in the form of a parable. The purport of the parable was to teach that guests bidden to the feast celebrated in the kingdom of God ran the risk of forfeiting in various ways their privilege of being present there; while many outcasts not thought of by them would come in to occupy their vacant room. It was a veiled hint, whether or not at the time understood to be such, of the rejection that the proud, unbelieving Jews were incurring, and of the predestined substitution for them of the despised and lowly — nay, even of the Gentiles — as final inheritors of the blessings of the Gospel. It went home to the case of the Pharisee "watchers" of Jesus there present; but we have no reason to suppose that it went home to their conscience or their heart.

Where it was that the incident of this Pharisee dinner to Jesus occurred, we do not know; but there is indication of its having occurred in the course of the Lord's journeying to Jerusalem. The multitudes that accompanied him were now great, and he addressed to them teaching adapted to diminish their number: "Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all

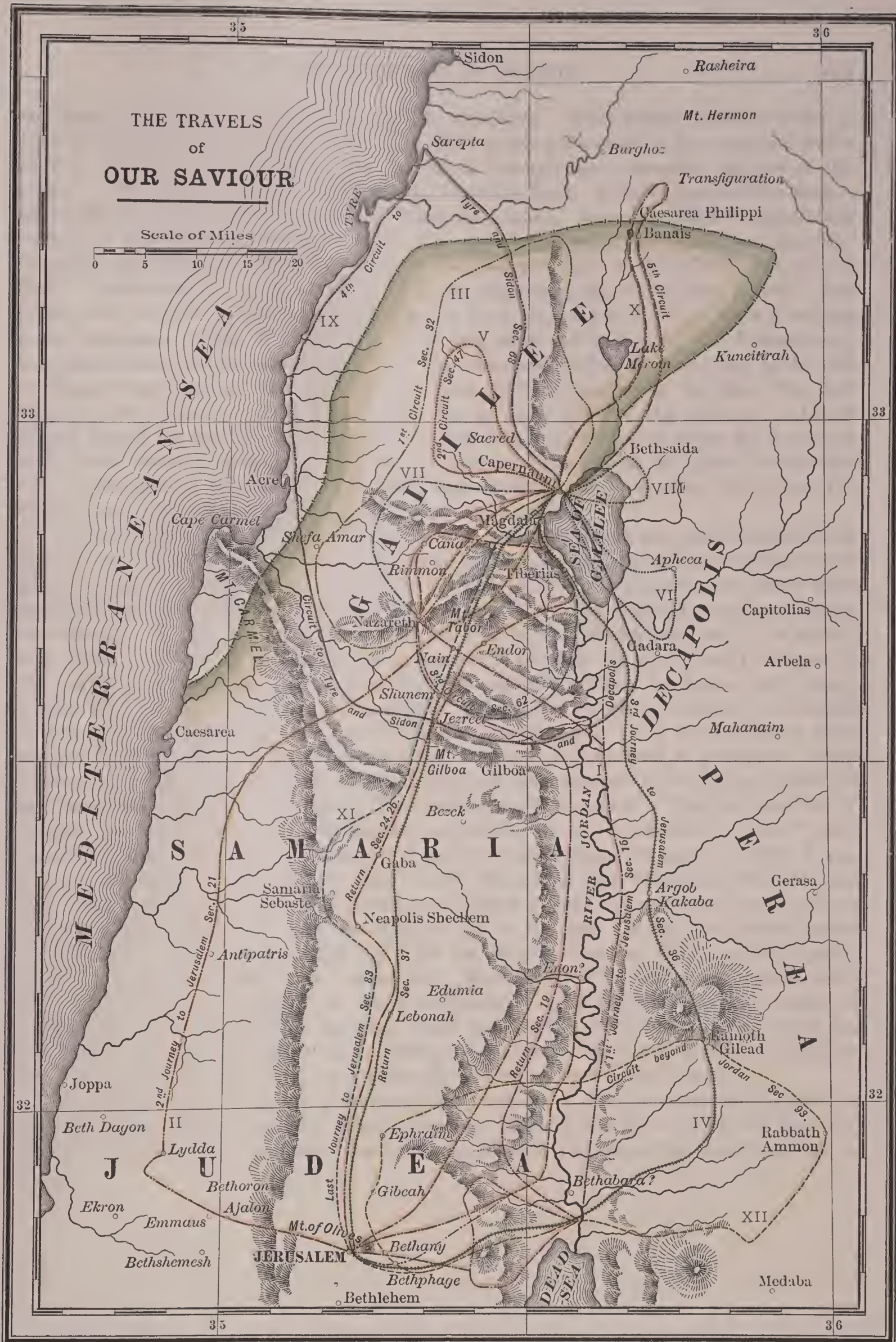
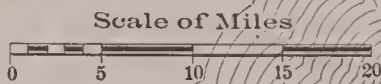
that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." He was resolved that there should be no misunderstanding as to the terms on which, and on which alone, discipleship to him could be maintained. Jesus was the most exacting of masters. Indeed, mastership cannot even be conceived of more exacting than his. Hear him speaking now to these multitudes: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." "He that hath ears to hear let him hear," was his final sifting word. Sifting it was; but not repelling. "If you have now some susceptibility of heart to entertain and understand what I say, use it; it will grow by use; but it will perish by disuse;" such was the sense of his language.

Publicans and sinners seem to have felt encouraged by the tenor of the teaching of Christ. They thronged to him in such numbers that Luke says they "all" were coming. This, of course, shocked the scribes and Pharisees. Their sanctimonious horror called out in succession three parables from the Lord, one of which, the last one, that of the Prodigal Son, is perhaps entitled to be pronounced the most famous and the noblest of all Christ's parables, and therefore the most famous and the noblest parable in the world. The parable of the Lost Sheep, and the parable of the Lost Piece of Silver preceded this. The visitor to Palestine may to this day see the picture realized in act, of that shepherd bearing the recovered sheep on his shoulder. The present writer remembers to have read somewhere what, if it be true, throws an interesting illustrative light on the parable of the Lost Piece of Silver. According to that statement, if it is rightly remembered, the ten pieces of silver were in the nature of a wedding gift, received by the wife from her husband. To lose one of them, would be accounted special ill fortune as foretokening some calamity about to befall. The recovery, therefore, of even a single one lost would, notwithstanding its trifling intrinsic value (less than twenty cents), constitute an occasion of rejoicing important enough to be celebrated in company with invited friends and neighbors.

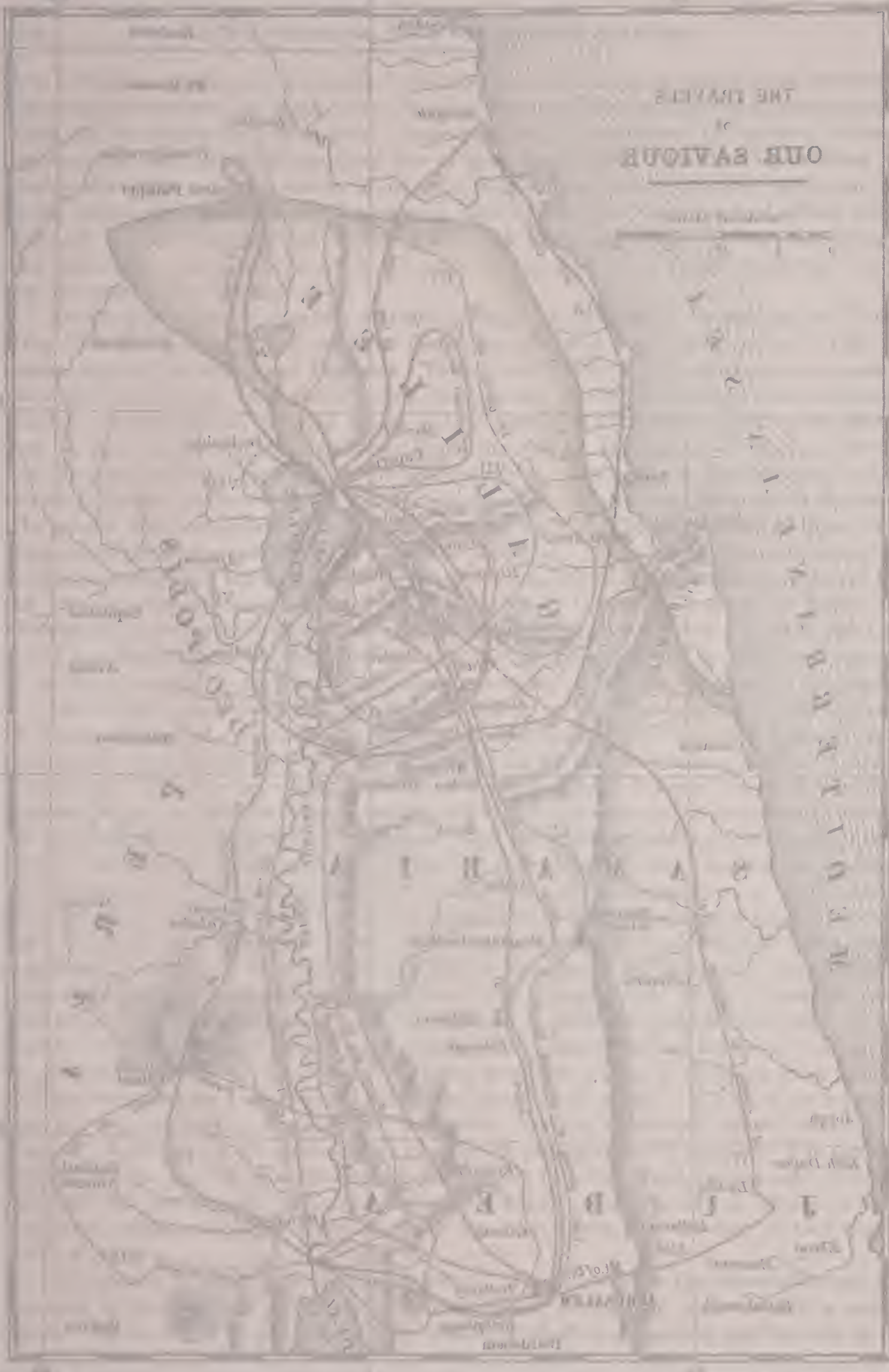
Out of the enormous mass of Rabbinical literature, or out of the equally enormous mass of the so-called sacred scriptures belonging to other religions than the Biblical, the student may occasionally bring to light some story worth reproducing for the admiration or even the instruction of men. But it is the unique character of the Gospels that to every one of its recorded parables belong an individual interest and an individual value that put it permanently among the treasured literary possessions of the human race. That story of the wayward prodigal son, at last repentant, and then more than forgiven—how it has mastered human imaginations and human hearts in all climes and all times! The beauty of it, the simplicity of it, the pathos of it, the power of it, the hold of it on the primal and universal instincts of human nature! Let some great artist in writing try his hand now in producing a parable like it. That artist would, after experiment, be of all men the loudest in praise of the inimitable, incomparable, unapproachable, easy supremacy of the parable of the Prodigal Son. And it seems to have been struck out at one stroke, in its unimprovable lines of perfection, with the mere voice of the teacher, and so trusted, unwritten, to the keeping of the impalpable and fickle air—thence to be gathered and fixed for us in form of written words by a man of whom we know almost nothing except that he wrote this, and a few other records such as this! Was there not a power here at work, not only in the speaking, but in the recording, other and higher than simply human? And consider the inexhaustible fecundity of producing power implied. For parable followed parable, as if from a fountain that could never run dry. And the fragments of such discourse that survive, are to be regarded as only meager specimens of the volume of this mellifluous teaching that flowed day after day from that mouth like the river of God which is full of water.

The parable of the Unjust Steward followed. This shows how the shrewdness may be separated in thought from the fraud of dishonest worldly dealing and made to teach a useful lesson. We are all of us so to use worldly wealth, in whatever measure it may be ours, as to

THE TRAVELS
of
OUR SAVIOUR



THE TRAVELER
OF
OUR SAVIOUR



earn ourselves a welcome at last to "the eternal tabernacles." That worldly wealth is called by Jesus the "mammon of unrighteousness"; probably as being conceived to have acquired always more or less taint of evil in passing to our hands through the "corrupted currents of this world." "Ye cannot serve God *and* Mammon," said the Lord. Luke tells us that the money-loving Pharisees scoffed at him, when they heard these things. Jesus responded by point-blank reproof. "You," he in effect said, "make a fair show before men; but God is not deceived." He added these words: "That which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." Praise from men is, according to Christ, an illegitimate object of human pursuit. And perhaps the pursuit of wealth is, with the most of those engaging in it, only a form of seeking praise from men. "Men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself," the Psalmist said, long before Jesus, and the saying holds yet. The consideration thus suggested may be the link in thought that connects with what has just been given the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, next following. This parable also, like so many other of the teachings of Christ uttered during his last journey to Jerusalem, dealt with that subject of which his heart was now so full, namely, the doom of woe that, by their rejection of him, his hostile countrymen were invoking upon themselves. The Rich Man (or Dives, as he is often called from the Latin), was a type, primarily, of the unbelieving Jewish nation.

Doubtless there were instances, not recorded, of mutual difference and quarrel arising from time to time among the disciples, as they journeyed in company; the chances of joint travel are proverbial for producing such results. It was very likely on the occurrence of one of these that the Lord said, "It is impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come," and taught the remedy: "Take heed to yourselves; if thy brother sin, rebuke him, and if he repent, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee saying I repent; thou shalt forgive him." We are not to brood in silence over a wrong done us; we are not to talk about it resentfully with others; we are to "rebuke"—of course tenderly—the wrongdoer, and give him a chance to express regret. It is noticeable that Jesus changes from plural to singular in giving these directions: "Take heed to *yourselves*; if *thy* brother sin." He would make the particular practical duty enjoined fit as close as possible to the individual conscience and heart. The apostles were staggered. "Forgive like that!" thought they, with wonder, as if feeling an impossibility in it. "Increase our faith!" they exclaimed aloud. The Lord will astonish them, will stagger them, yet more. "Why, if you had any faith at all," he in substance says, "if the principle of faith within you were even as a grain of mustard seed for size, so far from your finding it hard to forgive thus, you would be able to bid this sycamore tree here, Be thou torn up by the roots and be thou planted in the sea, with the certainty of its obeying you. Do not imagine that you will be earning special thanks by doing what I have now commanded. Regard yourselves still as unprofitable servants, even after having rendered the fullest obedience." Jesus thus describes the attitude of mind to be maintained by all his disciples toward themselves. He does not describe thus the attitude of mind which he himself will maintain toward them. He will be gracious, we may be sure; but we should be severe—not one toward another, but each toward himself.

At about this point in the journeying and teaching of Jesus, an incident occurred of comparative importance enough to receive treatment by itself, and so to arrest and close the present chapter; as it arrested and closed the stage then in progress of the Lord's activity in Perea.

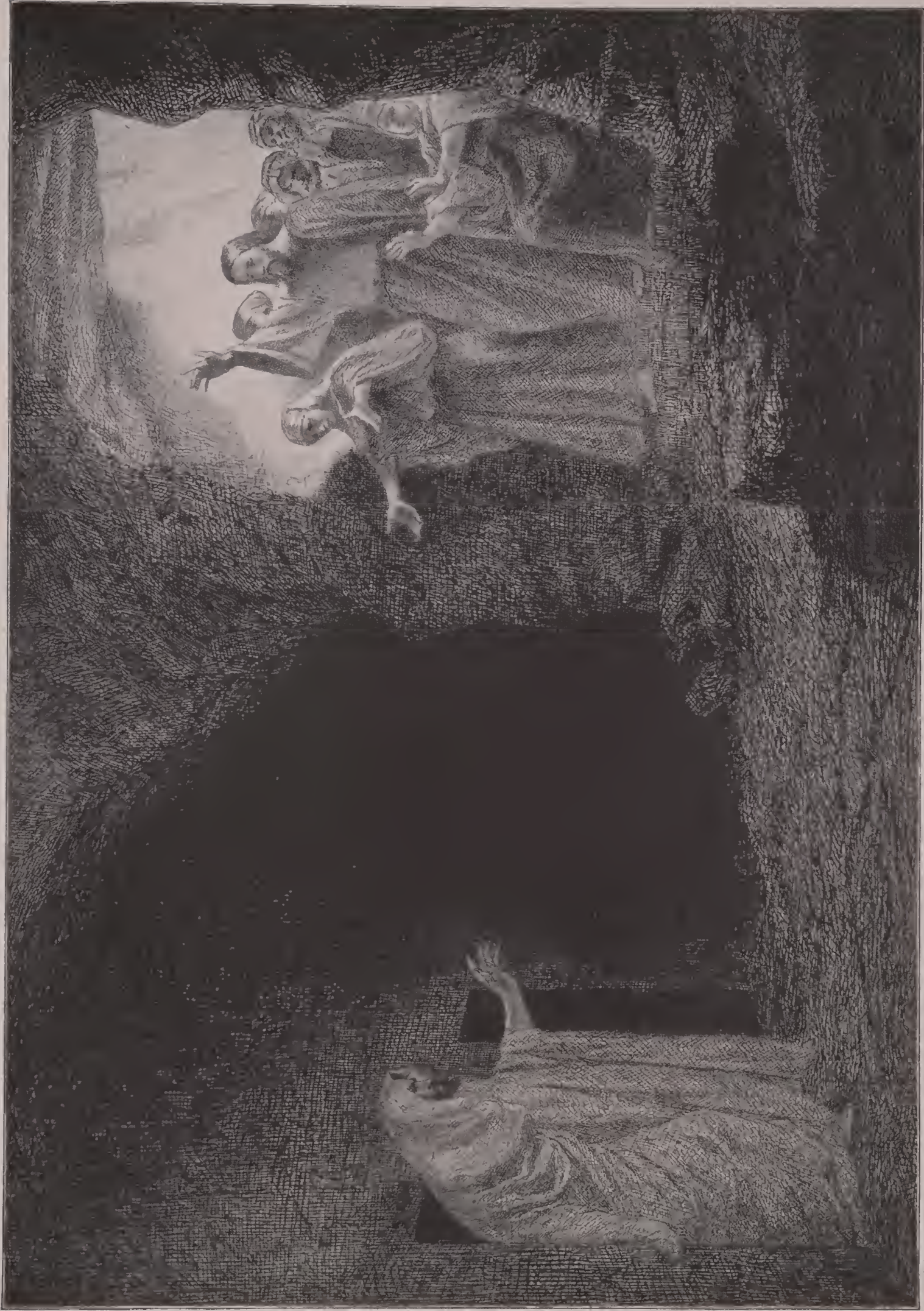
CHAPTER XVII.

"INTO JUDEA AGAIN."

"LET us go into Judea again," said Jesus to his disciples. The occasion was one of sad interest—sad to the Savior himself for his own sake, and the more sad to him as likewise so sad to friends whom he loved. That hospitable home in Bethany, the home of Mary and Martha, had been invaded by sickness; sickness so serious that word was sent to Jesus informing him of it. The sisters sent the word, and they couched it in terms of exquisite simplicity and pathos. It was a peculiarly eloquent appeal; for the sisters' love for the sick seemed to lose itself in love for the Lord. It was as if it were for his sake, and not for their own, that they mourned and were anxious. The message ran, "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." That meant their brother Lazarus.

Jesus replying said—to his disciples we may presume, though it may have been to the messenger for his report in return to the sisters: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." We should miss much, if we failed to observe how this form of expression associates Jesus in equality, almost in identity, with God. The glory of God would be promoted by the glory of his Son. Jesus made no immediate motion to act upon the news he had received. He stayed two days longer where he was, before proposing to his disciples with use of the words quoted at the beginning of this chapter, a return to Judea. "To Judea!" thought the disciples. They said: "Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?" This carries us back to the occasion described in our fourteenth chapter. What has been narrated in the chapters succeeding that may be assumed to have occurred during the interval of retirement in Perea upon which the Lord then immediately entered as a temporary refuge from the murderous hatred of the Jews.

No wonder the disciples expostulated with their Master against the suggested fresh exposure of his life. But Jesus serenely replied: "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" His own appointed "day" had in it its unalterable measure of twelve hours—which could not be made less. He afterward explained the object of his intended return to Judea. "Our friend Lazarus," he said—with ineffable divine condescension he, in that word "our," had equaled himself with his disciples, as to their common bond with him of friendship to the sick man of Bethany—"Our friend Lazarus," he said, "is fallen asleep; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." In his expression of purpose to "awake" the sleeper, he separates himself from his disciples, and says "I." The disciples did not understand their Master's gentle euphemism. Sleep was a good sign, they thought. He will get well, they innocently said, if he have fallen asleep. They really meant perhaps, Thou wilt not need to go to him. Jesus now plainly told them, "Lazarus is dead." It was undoubtedly his supernatural knowledge that enabled him to impart this information. He also told them he was glad for their sake that he had been absent from Bethany; the result for them would be a needed deepening of their faith—a faith soon to be so desperately tried. This seems to imply that had he been present in Bethany, Lazarus should not have died. But it would, to the disciples, be far more striking and impressive if Lazarus should be raised from the dead, than it could have been, had he only been prevented (of course, this must have been beyond anybody's actual observation) from dying. "Nevertheless, let us go unto him," the Lord added. Thomas then said something that ought to be well considered by those who would form a just idea of this disciple's character. "Doubting Thomas," he is often called; but loyal Thomas he likewise assuredly was. To his fellow-disciples, he said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." Thomas was sure that Jesus'



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“LAZARUS, COME FORTH!”

going to Judea would end in the death of his Master; and that death, in the fullness of his love, he was minded to share.

When Jesus reached Bethany, the end, the seeming end, to Lazarus had already come. Four days before, they had laid him in his sepulcher. "Now, Bethany was nigh Jerusalem," so John says, in the past tense; for Bethany had probably already ceased to be, when John wrote his Gospel — the predicted dreadful destruction of Jerusalem, with of course its suburbs, having intervened. The sisters' friends from the neighboring city were present in considerable numbers, on a visit of consolation to the house. Martha got early word of Jesus' approach, and she went out to meet him; while Mary still kept her place and her posture, sitting, at home. Martha's first burst of speech was exquisitely natural and touching; one still feels the effect of the tears in her words: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." So much for love and lament; with faith enough mingling to make the anguish complete. Then this: "And even now, I know that whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee." Faith there is a note so strong that the anguish has almost died out of the language. Jesus met her with, "Thy brother shall rise again." Did he mean, I will raise him to life? Martha would not be over-hasty to take the Lord in this sense. She said, touchingly, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." There was question, there was appeal, in the pathetic inflection of the voice. Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." Astounding paradoxes to be so calmly propounded! Jesus adds a question that puts Martha to the necessity of immediate reply: "Believest thou this?" If she hesitates, though but an instant, she will already have replied, and her reply will be, No. She says, "Yea, Lord; I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." This ended the exchanges between Jesus and Martha.

Martha, sent by the Master, summoned Mary to him. Mary's friends followed Mary, supposing that she was going to her brother's grave, there to weep. Mary reaching Jesus fell down at his feet, with Martha's own first words, repeated, on her lips. Her weeping, and the weeping of her companions, shook the calm of Jesus' spirit; he was "troubled." "Where have ye laid him?" he asked. "Lord, come and see," they said. Jesus felt himself overpowered. He wept. "Behold, how he loved him!" said the Jews. Some of them even said, "Could not this man who opened the eyes of him that was blind, have kept Lazarus from dying?" That Jerusalem miracle of restoring sight to one blind from his birth, had made a profound and lasting impression. Jesus, inwardly wrought upon with a feeling of resentment that such things, the result of sin, should be in the world, came to the tomb. This was an excavation, probably in rock, and with a rock it was covered. "Take ye away the stone," said Jesus. Martha's sentiment of reverence for the dead prevailed for a moment over her faith. She would not have the corruption of her beloved exposed to the senses of observers. She expostulated. "Consider," she in effect said; "he has been four days buried. Corruption has already begun its work." Jesus rallied her faith with, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou believedst, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" There were willing hands to take the covering of stone away. Then "Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me." Does this import that Jesus had prayed already on this behalf, and had received assurance of answer? What he adds favors the idea: "And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude standing around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me." What confident communion of Son and Father, held consciously in the hearing of the multitude for their sake! Will God sanction this appeal? If he does, what can prevent everyone's believing? But will everyone believe?

Having so prayed, or, as John expresses it, "spoken," Jesus cried, "with a loud voice," as if in token of the resurrection energy exerted: "Lazarus, come forth!" Nobody could describe,



BIDA.

THE TEN LEPERS.

nobody can conceive, the impression upon bystanders, when they saw issue from the tomb the living figure of the buried man, the grave-bands still on him making fast both hands and feet, and his face bound about with its napkin of ghastly white. "Loose him," said Jesus, "and let him go." Jesus had loosed the mighty bonds of death; others might undo for the man, dead no more, the fastenings with which those mighty bonds had been unconsciously symbolized.

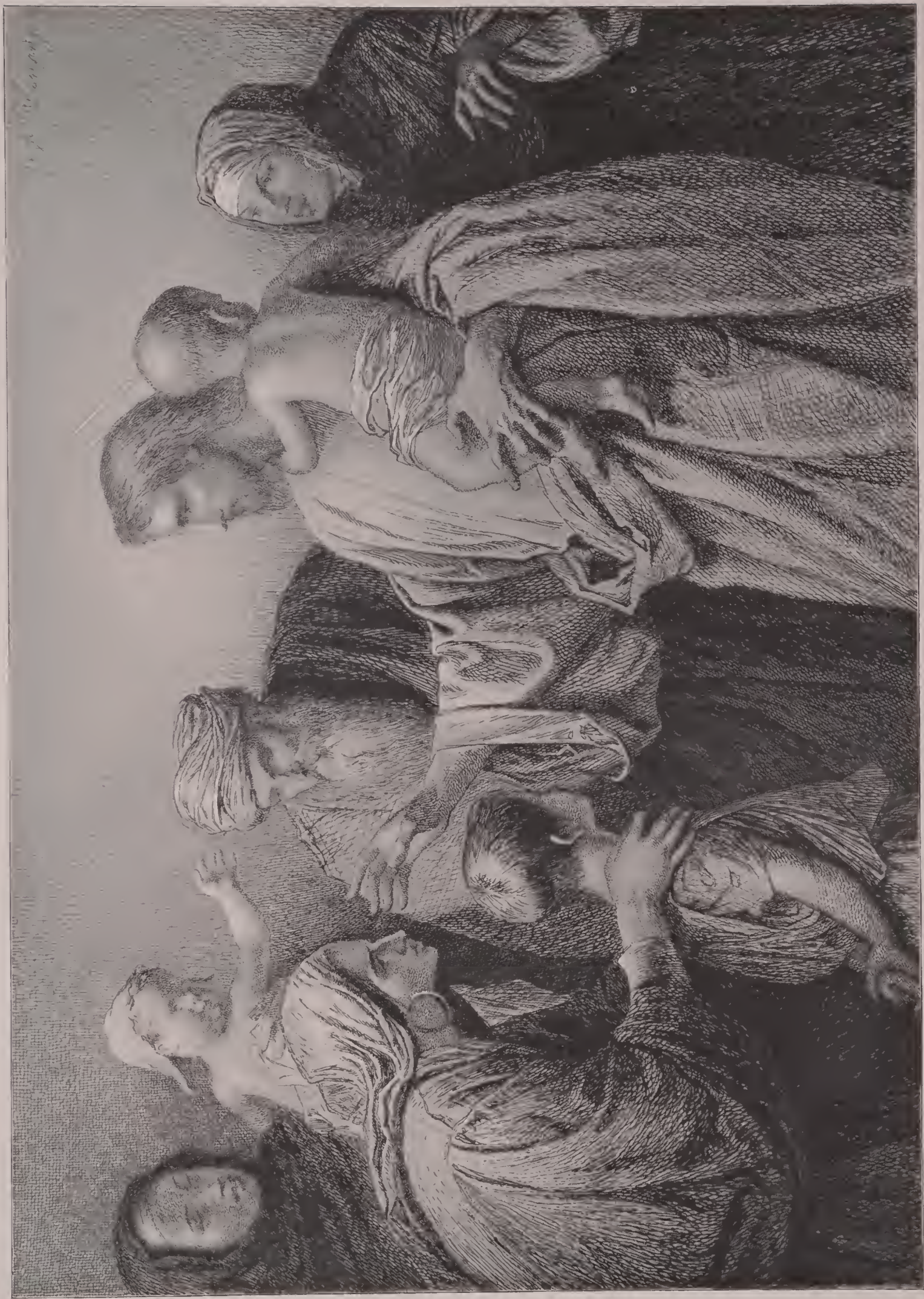
CHAPTER XVIII.

ANOTHER POSTPONEMENT.

NOT everyone did believe. Some out of the number of those who witnessed this stupendous miracle, went away from the scene of it, and, either in an idly tattling, or else in a maliciously meddling, spirit, told the Pharisees what Jesus had done. The result was that the embers of Pharisaic hatred for him were blown into fresh flame. From before this threatening outburst Jesus retired once more, this time into a place called Ephraim "near to the wilderness"—a "city" which it is not possible now exactly to locate. Here he stayed with his disciples, no one can say exactly how long.

Perhaps, when at length the last Passover drew nigh, Jesus may have set out from Ephraim and accomplished one more general circuit of the regions previously traversed by him. If that expression in Luke previously spoken of, "through the midst of Samaria and Galilee," is rightly to be rendered as thus given, and not, as would be equally true to the Greek, "on the border line between Samaria and Galilee," then it becomes entirely admissible to suppose that it relates to such a last general tour as the one here suggested. The question involved is one much debated by scholars. Unanimous agreement is not to be hoped for. To us who here study the earthly life of the Lord, it is sufficient to rest reasonably certain, as we are warranted in doing, that what follows in this chapter occurred, at any rate, during some stage of the last progress of the Lord toward Jerusalem. The incident of the healing of the ten lepers we know thus occurred; for Luke expressly says so. In the same connection, he also says that it was while "he was passing through the midst of [or else, between] Samaria and Galilee." Those wretched victims of the most desperate of slow, malignant diseases "stood afar off," as required by law or custom; but they lifted up their voices in suit of mercy from Jesus. He bade them go and show themselves to the priests, as was required in case of a supposed cure of leprosy. They had the faith to go, and they were cleansed as they went. One of them when cleansed turned back, and shouted aloud his gladness, glorifying God. He fell forward on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Jesus exclaimed, "Were not the ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there none found that returned to give glory to God save this alien?" For the one thanksgiver was a Samaritan.

The Pharisees asked when the kingdom of God was coming. We are at hopeless loss to know exactly the whole meaning of what the Lord replied; for a certain important word that he used bears equally well either one of two meanings. "The kingdom of God is *among* you;" or, "the kingdom of God is *within* you." When we consider to whom Jesus was speaking, it seems more likely that he meant "*among* you," that is, already present—had they but eyes to discern it! To the disciples then Jesus gave solemn instructions applicable to the time approaching when he should no longer be personally present with them, and while yet the crisis of his doom should be overhanging Jerusalem. They were necessarily somewhat veiled words that he spoke. The suddenness, the inevitableness, the completeness, of the



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OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

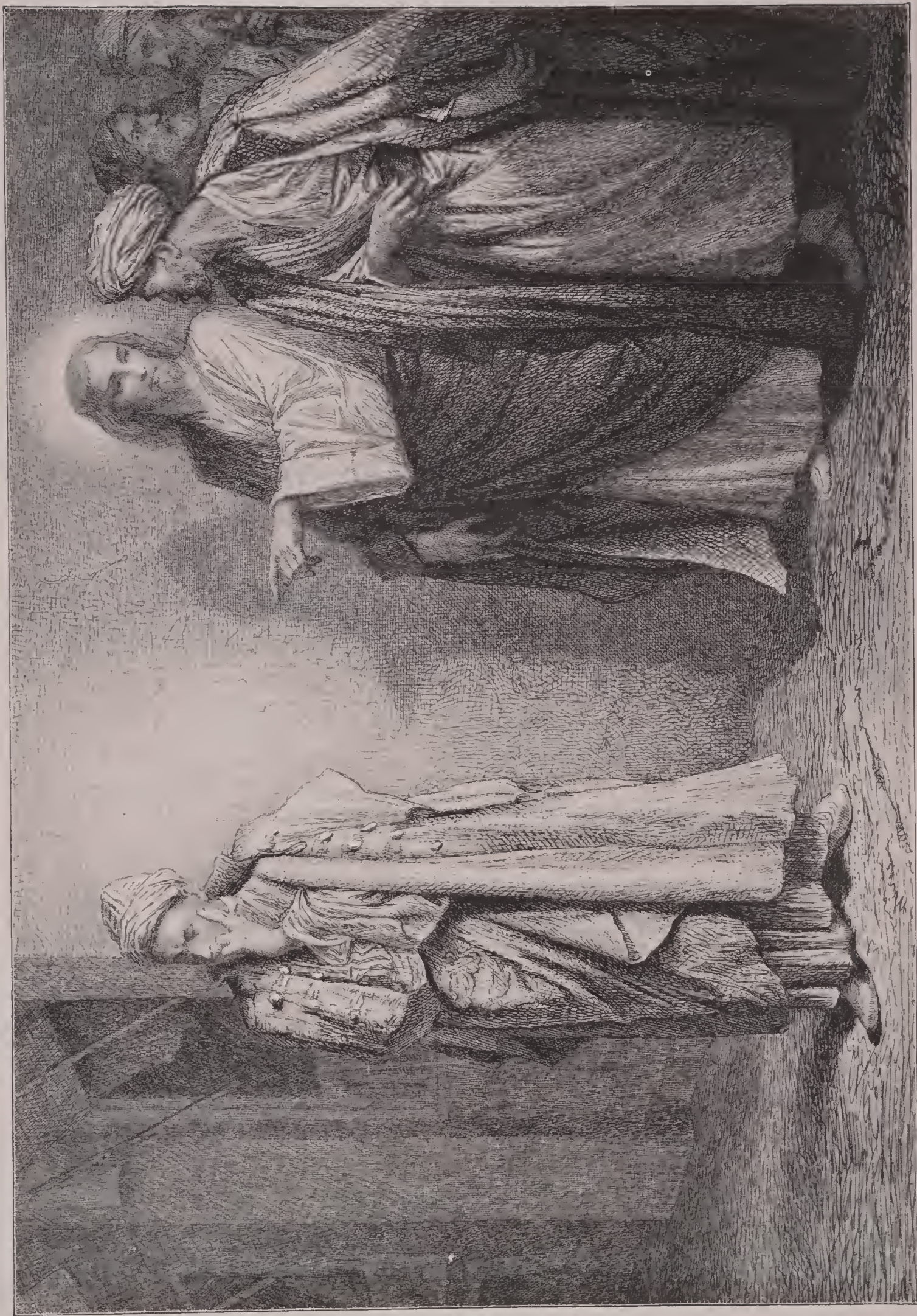
national ruin that would descend, are impressively described. It would be as in the days of Noah, when the flood came; it would be as in the days of Lot, when fire and brimstone rained down from heaven. "In the day when the Son of Man is revealed," "he which is on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take them away." "There shall be two women grinding together; one shall be taken, and the other left." "Where, Lord?" asked the bewildered disciples. That they would learn soon enough themselves from the events forerunning the predestined fulfillment. It was sufficient for the present, if he excited their vigilant fears. He answered them somewhat mysteriously, perhaps in terms of a proverb. "Where the body is, thither will also the eagles be gathered together." Some have imagined that here was a designed allusion to the Roman army of destruction—the Roman military standard having an "eagle" as its device. A brief and telling parable was dropped by the way, addressed to certain persons complacently self-righteous and disdainful toward their fellows. Everybody knows it by heart; it is the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican.

Those tireless Pharisees! They tempt Jesus again. This time it is a question about divorce. Jesus' reply has been of the highest historic importance. It has perhaps had more influence in purifying domestic life, in cementing human society, in promoting civilization, than all the ethical precepts of all the human philosophers that have taught since the world began. It declares the sacredness and the inviolability of the marriage bond. It has upon the whole had universal and uninterrupted sway in the custom and the legislation of Christendom. The sanction of it is expressed in that grave sentence, "What, therefore, God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

A significant conjunction of teachings. In immediate sequel to the teaching on the subject of marriage, little children were brought to Jesus for the holy touch of his hands upon them. The Lord had just sanctified marriage; it was fit that he should next put the seal of his touch on the fruit of marriage. The "little children" were babes, as we know from Luke. What he was asked to do for these little ones, and what he did, was to "touch" them and to "pray." These two things and no more. He used no oil to anoint them; he used no water to baptize them. What he then did for those particular babes, we feel sure he did in symbol and in effect for all, not less than for them. The disciples had been too self-important in the matter of this fond application to Jesus. They were for sending the bringers of the babes, parents no doubt, away. But Jesus was displeased. He uttered those immortal words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."¹—words which have blessed the lot of children in all Christian generations since, and words, for sweet and potent benignity, not paralleled by utterance from any other in all the world that ever spoke with human lips since time began. "These two things and no more," we said. But those two only things Jesus did with a certain fullness that overflowed and seemed to make them more. He took the babes in his arms to lay his hands upon them; and as he "prayed," he "blessed" them. Beautiful act benign! It has been a prolonged benediction ever since. The fragrance of it is not less—more rather—that it has been so widely diffused.

There is no end to the variety of lovely pictures that compose the more tranquil side of this idyllic earthly life of Jesus. What has just been related seems to have taken place indoor, or at any rate at some little remove from the highway. Mark says, "As he was going forth into the way," that is, from the scene of the blessing pronounced on little children, there came to him, not walking, even with quickened gait, but actually running, a young man—he was a man of condition, a "ruler"—who kneeled in the dust at Jesus' feet and asked an eager question. "Good Master," said he, "what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Noble inquiry! It was most reverently made. Did the young man know how reverently? He had said,

¹ Mark x, 14.



BIDA.

THE RICH YOUNG MAN.

"Good Master." Was he aware what that adjective implied? Jesus will sound him and see. He asked, "How callest thou me good?" how? that is, why? on what ground? in what sense? "None is good," the Lord went on to say, "save one, that is, God." It was as if Jesus would ask, "Dost thou, indeed, perceive the God in me? Is that why thou callest me good?" Without waiting for any reply from the young ruler, Jesus said, "If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments." He at the same time recalled a number of these. "Master, all these things have I observed from my youth," the young man, no doubt with all modesty, with self-knowledge however defective, said in reply, adding, "What lack I yet?" Jesus looked upon this youthful seeker after truth with a peculiar regard and instinctively loved him. "One thing thou lackest," he tenderly said, "go sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." At this, alas, the young man's countenance fell, and he went sadly away. It was his misfortune to be very rich. Jesus perhaps followed the young man with his eyes as he went away; but if he did, he soon withdrew his look, and turned it round about himself, at the same time sighing aloud: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" To the disciples expressing their amazement at this utterance, Jesus would abate nothing from what he had said. Indeed, he said it again still more strongly, but added, "Things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Peter spoke up and said, "Lo, we have left all and have followed thee." Jesus made his reply to Peter general in form, so as to include all places and all ages, promising to such as answered Peter's description, a hundredfold at present, "with persecutions," and "eternal life" at last. Then came the parable of the Vineyard, with its lesson at once for the Jews as a nation, jealous of the Gentiles who were soon to be equaled with themselves in blessing; and for all the individuals of the human race, summoned, whether early or late, to share the salvation and the responsibilities of the Gospel. Like a solemn refrain comes in once more at the end that notice to all, "The last shall be first, and the first last."

Jesus was burdened with his prophetic sense of things to be. He yearned to impart his secret to his disciples. So he now takes his twelve apostles away from the general throng, and, walking forward still, tells them yet again of his own impending doom. He particularizes more than ever before. He is to be mocked, to be scourged, to be spit upon, to be crucified. But, as ever, so now, he is after that to be raised from the dead the third day. There was something at this time unusually impressive—impressive to the point of awfulness—in the mien and manner of Jesus. Mark notes it strikingly. The Lord seems to have quickened his pace. He went *before* his apostles, no longer with them. They were "amazed"; they were even "afraid," following him. It was the Spirit in him that urged him on like a motive power stronger than he. He was under the mighty hand of God. But to that hand he responded with the impulse of a solemnly joyful obedience. He saluted his future and hastened to its dreadful embrace. But there was the irrepressible buoyancy of hope and of joy in his feeling. We know it was with support of the "joy set before him," that he endured the cross when it came; we need not doubt that he also anticipated the cross with something of the same victorious exultation. Luke tells us that of all that Jesus had thus foretold, the apostles had understood—nothing. This statement he twice repeats strongly. It was reserved for two of the most favored of the twelve, to furnish prompt melancholy proof that this indeed was so. That proof may be reserved for the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE APPROACH TO THE CITY.

ALAS, for human frailty! And alas for human ambition, which the frailty accompanying is not often sufficiently conscious of itself to abash! Just as these themes of thought and prophecy, destruction for Jerusalem, obedience even to death for himself, were usurping the heart and employing the tongue of the Savior, who should come to him but a woman in suit of worldly advantage at his hands? It was a mother, and she brought a petition for preferment on behalf of her sons. Those sons were the brothers James and John. Salome, their mother, begged that the two chief places in the Lord's kingdom might be given to them. Jesus seems to have seen plainly enough that the sons had prompted the mother. His answer was to them, and not to her: "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" "We are able," they fatuously replied. There was no hope yet of making them understand. Jesus, with a gentleness that was severe, repelled them. And now the ten fellow-apostles promptly avail themselves of their chance to show that they also are as selfish as James and John. For they are moved with indignation against the two applicants; an indignation natural indeed on their part, but fatally self-revealing. Jesus in effect rebukes the twelve apostles all alike; the two had only been a little more forward with the same spirit that really animated equally the ten. Whosoever would be first among you, said the Lord, shall be bond servant of all. "For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." In those words, "his life a ransom," is inextricably contained a statement, sufficient for practical use, of that great teaching of Christ and his apostles, which theologians call the doctrine of vicarious atonement.

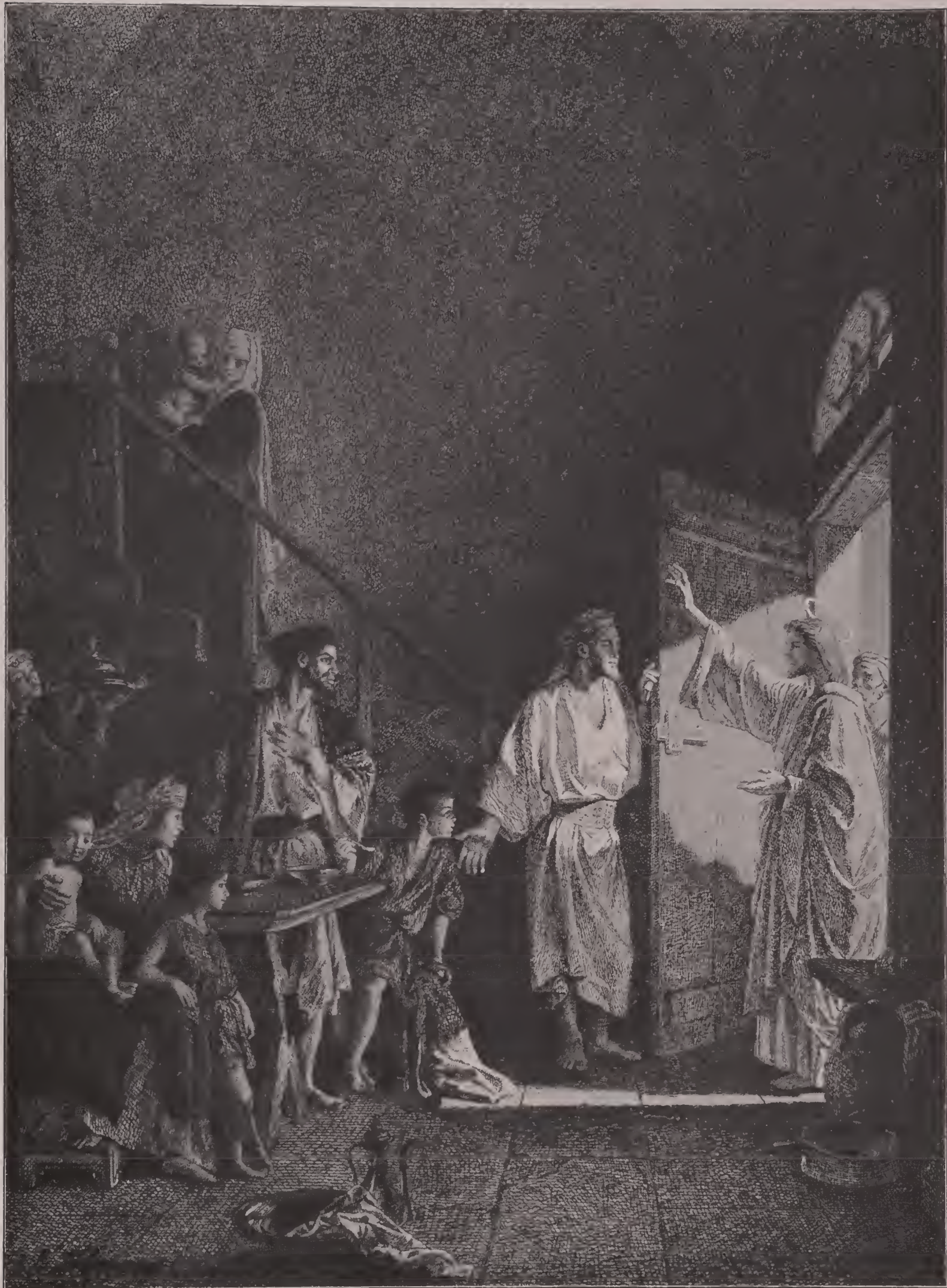
Multitudes, multitudes! The impression of them will not forsake the memory and the imagination of the historians of Jesus. The Lord had reached Jericho on his way to Jerusalem. The tumult of such a following—a following multiplied now by the concourse of Galilean pilgrims thronging to the feast—excited first the curiosity, and then the hope, of two blind men sitting by the wayside. When these unfortunates learned that this was no other than the far-famed Jesus of Nazareth, they set up a loud importunate cry for mercy from him. The multitude said, "Hush!" but they only shouted the louder. Jesus stayed his steps. "Call them," said he. The multitude changed their style. "Be encouraged," they said; "he is calling you." The usual event—they were healed. Perhaps the same thing was repeated on the same occasion. Matthew says "two blind men," not described as "beggars"; Mark and Luke agree in mentioning only one case, and that, with each evangelist, was the case of a "beggar." But it may not have been for both evangelists the same beggar. For Mark names his man, it was Bartimæus; and he gives the healing as performed on the Lord's way out from Jericho; while Luke gives his as performed on the way in. Matthew's story of the two men healed belongs to the occasion of the Lord's leaving Jericho. Nothing would be more natural than that there should be blind men sitting by the way on both sides of the city; and nothing more natural than that the second man should repeat, in the same terms, the same application that, as he probably would have heard, had so wonderfully succeeded with the first. Of Matthew's two cases Mark mentions only one, the one which he could identify by name. As for the behavior of the multitude, that too would quite naturally reproduce itself on successive occasions. What would be instinctive with a crowd once, would be equally instinctive with a crowd a second time; and it is not at all necessary to conceive—indeed, it would be highly improbable—that the whole mass of the people knew exactly everything said at a given particular point among them; one group "rebuked" the clamoring beggar of

to-day, a different group, the clamoring beggar of the morrow, neither group having the least knowledge of the other. This explanation is suggested only; it is not insisted upon. In any case, there is substantial agreement among the various historians, and this is quite sufficient to engage the candid reader's confidence.

A novel and picturesque incident, one full of the ever incalculable, yet always sublimely self-consistent, character of the Lord. A certain rich man in Jericho whose business was that of chief collector of revenue, was exceedingly anxious to get sight of Jesus. He being short in stature, his chance was small in the crowd unless he could command some overlooking position. For this purpose he was willing to sacrifice his dignity, and, running on before, he clambered into a sycamore tree on the way by which Jesus would pass. A great surprise awaited this man. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up into the tree and called the occupant by his name. "Zaccheus," said he, "make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house." Jesus had not mistaken his man. Zaccheus hastened down and with great joy welcomed the Lord to his house. There was a general murmur of disapprobation at this. "He is gone in to lodge with a sinner," they said. But Zaccheus was a repentant sinner. Before that divine Guest went away, he stood up in the presence of Jesus and declared his purpose to devote half his wealth to the poor and to restore fourfold what he might have wrongfully exacted of any man. Jesus said, "To-day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." The Lord, then, seemed satisfied with the half from Zaccheus; though he had required the whole from that amiable young ruler. This may show that the latter demand was suited to the perceived character and need of the particular person, constituting rather a test for him than a thing to be carried out in actual practice by all.

Those words to Zaccheus were perhaps spoken by Jesus as a kind of farewell before he started away. He added a parable, suggested by the vicinity of Jerusalem and by the current general expectation that the kingdom of God, of course misconceived of, was on the immediate verge of openly appearing. The parable was that of the Ten Pounds. The underlying thought of it was that haunting one, of the growingly imminent end of the Lord's earthly life and of the narrowing margin of probation left for the Jewish people. Jesus was about to withdraw from the earthly province of the universal dominion of God and go to the capital seat and court of the King in heaven, there to receive from his Father a rulership, and then to return. The figure was to Christ's hearers familiar and striking. It was drawn from what again and again happened under the observation of men of that time, in the administration of the Roman empire. The lesson was that the result would be fatal to the obstinately rebellious. This teaching was doubly significant; having its application first to the judged and endangered Jewish nation, and then to every individual soul, of whatever time, in that soul's relation, obedient or disobedient, to Christ the Vicegerent of God.

This parable spoken, the solemn progress was resumed in the direction of Jerusalem — the Lord himself going on in advance of all; as if, in his own prescient mind, the separation and consecration of himself to his approaching sacrificial death, unaccompanied and lonely, were already begun.



BIDA.

PEACE BE TO THIS HOUSE.

CHAPTER XX.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.

FROM Jericho to Bethany in the suburbs of Jerusalem was a distance of some nineteen miles; a difficult and dreary day's walk, the road rough, the country desolate. At Bethany Jesus arrived, as seems most probable, on the evening of a Friday. It was the Friday immediately preceding the Friday of his passion. Only a week, therefore, now intervenes before the tragic end of this heavenly earthly life. "End," do we say? Should we not say rather interruption only, for was not the life soon resumed for a little while at least on earth, before it was finally taken up out of human sight into the heaven of heavens?

There was much inquiry for Jesus, with much rumor and speculation about him, rife in the capital city, while he yet tarries for a day or two in the neighboring village of Bethany. He was guest doubtless at the home of the sisters Martha and Mary. "They" — but this word does not necessarily, does not probably, mean the sisters — "they," perhaps the Bethany community in partnership, make him a supper. It is in the house of one Simon; "the leper," he is called, as being well known in that character; become well known, we may presume, from having been healed by the Lord. Lazarus was present as guest. Martha was among those that served. As for Mary, she performed a part not required which has had the effect of making that occasion more famous perhaps than any other social occasion in the world. She brought with her to the supper, in an alabaster cruse, a very costly ointment of nard; a pound's weight, John says. This she poured, in lavish effusion, over the Lord's head, as he sat at meat. She also anointed his feet, wiping them with her hair. The house was filled with the odor of the ointment. It was a beautiful act of love and devotion. But there were some, and, alas, among these were the disciples — of the disciples, especially Judas — that murmured at such a waste of that unguent. They thought, and Judas at last outright said, that it might have been sold for the benefit of the poor; it would have brought 300 pence! (This sum represents perhaps \$100, present value.) Mary was disconcerted. Had she made a mistake? But Jesus came to her relief. "Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me." He put a pathetic interpretation upon her act: "She hath anointed my body aforehand for the burying." How full that prophetic human heart divine was of the coming end! Then he added a prediction which is every day yet, as it has been every day since it was uttered, and this over ever-increasing areas of the great globe, receiving its never-completed fulfillment: "Whosoever the Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." When ever was other loving woman's simple act so profusely rewarded with inexhaustible revenues of affectionate fame?

The common people got word of Jesus' being at Bethany, and they began to resort thither. They were eager to see Jesus; but Lazarus, too, they wanted to see him. This involved Lazarus also in danger from the envy and hatred of the Jews. They coupled him with Jesus in their plots of murder.

On the Sunday following, that is, the next day probably after the supper at Simon's, Jesus enters Jerusalem. But the entry is not made by him on foot, as the preceding journeys thither had all of them been made. The Messiah will enter his capital city as King. He provides himself an ass, a young one which man never before bestrode, and takes his seat upon it. The moment was one of the wildest popular excitement. The people thought they saw the commencement in triumph of the Messianic kingdom. The multitudes of pilgrims to the city from all quarters of the land swelled the following of Jesus to uncounted numbers, and the contagion of excitement was like a spreading conflagration. Nothing that could be thought of

was left undone by the throngs to testify their delirious joy. They stripped off their outer garments and strewed them in the way before Jesus. They flew to the wayside trees, and to trees in the fields adjoining, and cutting off branches flung these down on the road for their King to pass over. The earth was not fit for even the young ass that bore him to plant its feet upon. Meantime, shontings before him, shoutings behind him, shoutings around him, with waving of palm branches in innumerable hands. "Hosanna!" they multitudinously cried, "hosanna in the highest!" "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" "Blessed the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David!"

But there were some spectators that kept themselves perfectly collected and cool amid the general ecstasy. Those omnipresent Pharisees were there, by deputation perhaps; and they gave Jesus a chance to clear himself, if he would, from any complicity in these reprehensible extravagances of the people. "Master," they thoughtfully said, "rebuke thy disciples." But Jesus sternly and eloquently replied, "I tell you that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out." A crisis like that which was passing, demanded a voice. The insensate stones should provide it, if there were no human beings to speak.

The sight of Jerusalem, beheld from Olivet, affected her King to tears. Then again was uttered by him, though not yet for the last time, a lamentation of his, with prophecy, over the doomed city; lamentation laden with a weight of pathos such as certainly never was charged upon human speech before. The commentary of subsequent history was soon fearfully to emphasize — if possible augment — the somber solemnity of the Savior's boding words.

When he finally entered the city, his entrance sent an agitation to the very heart of Jerusalem. "Who is this?" was the question asked by the multitudes already there. "This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee," the multitudes accompanying replied. The day was far spent. Jesus proceeded to the temple, went in, and took a survey of the things that were there. His action in doing this must have been peculiarly impressive to have invited the record that was made of it by the historian. He then, it being now eventide, returned for the night to Bethany with the twelve.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE LAST MONDAY.

THE hastening days of the last week (often called "Passion Week") of the Savior's earthly life were very unequally marked with incident recorded. Two incidents only are given for Monday. Monday morning, as afterward daily (unless Wednesday was an exception) till the end, he went from Bethany, where he spent his nights, to Jerusalem. His resort was always to the temple. On his way thither Monday morning, he hungered. He may have spent his night in watching and prayer, and so have left Bethany fasting. Or he may have breakfasted early without appetite, and then delayed his start so long as naturally to feel hungry with exercise and the lapse of time. He saw at a distance a wayside fig tree that seemed, from its appearance, to promise him some refreshment of food; but coming to it he found thereon nothing but leaves. It was, to be sure, not yet the season of figs; but this particular tree, for some reason of situation perhaps, was precociously forward, and there should have been young fruit, advanced enough to be edible, hidden in the foliage; the law of fruit-bearing for the fig tree being fruit before leaves. Or there might be fruit of last year's crop still hanging on the boughs. But fruit there was none. The tree was barren. It never should be other than so. Its chance of

reformation was gone. For the Lord would make it an impressive object-lesson to all generations. It should stand forever in a kind of acted parable of the Jewish nation's character and destiny. "No man eat fruit from thee henceforward for ever," Jesus judicially said. The disciples heard these remarkable words, and they had speedy occasion to note the result. "How did the fig tree immediately wither away?" they asked their Master. He replied by again emphasizing to them the omnipotence of faith, bidding them but believe that they have received the things they asked for in prayer, with his assurance annexed, "Ye shall have them." As if to guard against an uplifting of spiritual pride inspired by the idea of omnipotence in prayer through faith, the Lord immediately adjoins this: "And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against anyone; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." But, in thus joining here the sequel of result befalling the fig tree with the instruction called out from Christ by the wondering question of the disciples, we have been anticipating a little. This partly belongs to the story of Tuesday.

Before returning to the story of Monday, shall we entertain two questions that inevitably suggest themselves? First, Was the cursing of the fig tree a yielding, on the Lord's part, to the petulance of personal disappointment? Second, Was it an infringement of property rights? One and the same answer disposes of both questions. The Lord *could* wither that tree with a word. Whoever could, thereby proved that, if he would, he properly might. Besides, it was a wayside tree; probably, therefore, not individual property. Moreover, being barren, it was worthless, except for shade. It was in fact by being cursed converted to a public use far more beneficent and diffusive, than it could possibly have served, had it continued for its time to thrive—even in fruit-bearing; much more, in sterility.

From the cursing of the fig tree, Jesus seems to have gone on directly to the temple, where the Jewish nation, the antitype of that showy and worthless tree, maintained its imposing make-believe of flourishing in luxuriant leafy, but fruitless, pride. He here repeated his symbolic act, that act first performed by him near the beginning of his public career, of purging out from the purlieus of the sanctuary of God the profane abominations of worldly barter and exchange that had been suffered again to gather there. The blind and the lame flocked in thither to him, and he healed them. It was a novel scene. The children meanwhile were crying aloud in the temple their infant hosannas to this Savior's name. Again the sense of propriety in those chief priests and scribes was rudely disturbed. They appealed to Jesus with the question, at the same time an intended reproach to him, and an unintended recognition of his power, "Hearest thou what these are saying?" "Yea," Jesus replied; adding, with a touch of lofty and indignant sarcasm: "Did ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" He was far from abdicating his own just claim to that ascription of praise to himself with which those half-unconscious children were rending the air. But he left those opposers, in their fenced and impregnable blindness and pride; he left the choiring children; passing out of the temple, he went forth from the city for a night of comparative quiet in Bethany.



JESUS CURSETH THE FIG TREE.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE LAST TUESDAY.

THIS is a crowded day — none more so in the whole history of the teaching activity of Jesus. What is recorded of the incidents by the way between Bethany and Jerusalem, has already by anticipation, been given. Arrived in the temple, Jesus found a ferment of hostile welcome awaiting him. This had been prepared by the occurrences of the day preceding. The Jews came to him — it seems like a set and formal proceeding on their part, an action of the whole Sanhedrim perhaps — and demanded to know by what authority he was acting as he was, and who gave him his authority. Jesus replied with one of his own unanswerable questions. “First answer me and then I will answer you,” was his proposal. “The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or from men?” It was a dilemma with two fatal horns, the one of which these Jews could not escape without getting themselves securely impaled on the other. If they said, “From heaven,” then it followed inevitably that they should have believed John’s testimony concerning him, Jesus. This testimony they had themselves formally sent to procure; and it had been rendered in terms express and unmistakable. It had affirmed the divine mission of Jesus. If, on the contrary, they said, “From men,” they would affront the people, and forfeit popular support; nay, even invoke the people’s anger, to the point of being themselves stoned by them. For John was universally regarded as a prophet. “We do not know,” they were forced ignominiously to say. “Neither tell I you,” said Jesus, “by what authority I do these things.”

Then in his turn Jesus, having his enemies at tremendous disadvantage, pressed them with parable upon parable intended to show how they, as representing the Jewish nation, had proved themselves, and were now proving themselves, unworthy depositaries of the sacred trust reposed with them by God. Nothing could exceed the terrible strength of language with which he upbraided and denounced them to their face and in the hearing of the people. His parable of the two sons, the one of whom said, “I will not,” but afterward went, and the other of whom said, “I go, sir,” and went not, he followed with this sentence upon his perverse and wicked hearers: “Verily, I say unto you, the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.” His parable of the Wicked Husbandman, he followed with this: “Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” Those enraged but helpless hearers of these things were, of course, well aware that they were themselves the aim of the Lord’s discourse. They were exasperated to the point of wishing to lay immediate violent hands upon him; but, “The people!” *they* believed on Jesus as prophet, and the people had a formidable way of taking sudden vengeance, when the whim seized them; they were dangerously ready and reckless with their stones.

Another of those deadly parables — this, after an interval during which apparently the enemies of the Lord had withdrawn in discomfiture to return again, after mutual counsel, for renewal of their attack. The parable now uttered of the Marriage of the King’s Son, resembles the parable of the Great Supper uttered on a previous occasion. It needed no application to be well enough understood. It pointed clearly to the exclusion and rejection by God of the unbelieving Jews. “Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness,” the sentence pronounced by the king in the parable upon his offending invited guest, was a transparently veiled warning to every unbelieving and disobedient Jew. If now this master in entrapping dialogue could be himself entrapped! “Discredit him, as once fairly vanquished, in the presence of the people, and the popular favor would be transferred to our side.” So

thought the enemies of the Lord. First, the Pharisees with the Herodians tried their hand. Exactly who the "Herodians" were, is not agreed. Perhaps members of a political party supporting the pretensions of Herod as legitimate Jewish ruler. The important thing is, that they were united now with the Pharisees against Jesus. Through a plausible spokesman of their number, they propound a question to Jesus. It is cast in somewhat the same form of dilemma as was that which had a little while before from Jesus so disastrously confounded them. The approach is made with much simulated respect for Jesus' wisdom and authority. At the same time, the question is introduced with a preface intended to incite him to imprudent self-compromising plainness of speech. "Master," they say, "we know that thou art true, and carest not for anyone: for thou regardest not the person of men, but of a truth teachest the way of God: Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?"

The question was subtly contrived, and on the whole adroitly presented; although the simplicity and the docility professed in the preamble were perhaps a trifle overdone. Jesus discerned the hypocrisy underlying and, while a hush of attention and expectancy suspended the bystanders, he uncovered it with a word. "Why tempt ye me?" he said. After that, what hope of entrapping him unawares? "Bring me a denary," he said. "Whose is this image and superscription?" It was Cæsar's; that was too palpable for dispute, and it constituted a sign, not to be gainsaid, of a political condition. That political condition had its unavoidable obligations. To deny these would be folly — it would be worse than folly, it would be treason. For Jesus to commit this treason would be for him to bring himself under the hostile hand and power of Rome. The hated Nazarene would thus be disposed of once and for all. On the other hand, should Jesus say, "Pay tribute," he would affront the patriot pride of the irresponsible crowd, and lose their support. They, the Jewish rulers, could then proceed against him without fear of exciting popular violence in his favor to their own undoing. The dilemma was apparently insoluble. But Jesus solved it instantaneously without effort. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," he said. "Your obligation to Cæsar is outward, discharge it; your obligation to God is inward, discharge that. Do not imagine that, in withholding tribute in coin having his image from Cæsar, you act meritoriously, while you are at the same time withholding from God his due, your own selves, created as you are with the ineffaceable mark of his image upon you." The Pharisees, with their Herodian helpers, were confounded and dumb.

The Sadducees took their turn. Their question to Jesus was one with which they no doubt had often perplexed the Pharisees. The Sadducees were the skeptics of their race and their time. They did not believe in such a thing as resurrection after death. So they supposed for Jesus the case of a woman married in succession to seven brothers, who die one after another leaving her widowed. (The custom of the Jews in the matter of matrimony made such a supposition quite reasonable, leaving it remarkable only in the number of the successive marriages supposed.) The woman herself at last dies. "In the resurrection, whose shall she be?" they triumphantly asked. "Ye do err," said Jesus, "not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." There is an unmistakable, and a most overawing, majesty, beyond anything human, in the tone with which this is said. There exists, Jesus teaches those Sadducees, no such difficulty as they have imagined, to embarrass the doctrine of a future state. In the resurrection there is no marriage. The inhabitants are as angels. As to the fact of resurrection, that, Jesus teaches, is inextricably involved in the Scripture in which God, announcing himself to Moses, says, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," said Jesus; "for all live unto him." God, that is to say, would not style himself the God of persons who had been, but were not; of mere nonentities with names. "Ye do greatly err," said Jesus, in conclusion. The Sadducees were silenced.

A scribe present was drawn to ask Jesus a question in a spirit different from that of his baffled predecessors; and this questioner got a correspondingly different answer. "What is the first commandment of all?" was the question. And the answer was, in brief, "Supreme love to God"; with this added, beyond the strict answer, "The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The scribe assented so heartily, that Jesus was moved to say, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

Christ's trial by questions was at an end. No man's courage was equal to entering those lists again. But Jesus had still his questions to propound. The following was one: "David in the Holy Spirit calls the Christ, Lord. How is he David's son?" Nobody could answer. We now easily know that the Christ was David's son according to the flesh, while according to the Spirit, he was David's Lord. The common people were delighted with these discomfitures of the Pharisees and the doctors. Jesus turned now to them, together with his own personal disciples, and entered upon a strain of the heaviest reprobation directed against the Pharisees and scribes. This ends in a sevenfold woe denounced upon them. The thunders, however, of righteous indignation and wrath die away in a tone of relenting sorrow over Jerusalem; the third, and not even yet the last, recurrence of that pathetic refrain. There was leisure to Jesus amid such occupations of his mind and his heart, to sit and watch what went on at the treasury of the temple. Here he pronounced that memorable commendation of his upon the widow's mite.

An incident not seeming to be in itself very noteworthy appears now in the Evangelist John's account of this day invested with a peculiar interest not only significant and solemn, but withal somewhat mysterious. Certain Greeks, from the Decapolis probably, and probably "proselytes of the gate" so-called (that is, Gentile proselytes to Judaism, not circumcised), expressed to Philip — whom perhaps they knew, he being of Bethsaida in the same region with themselves — a desire to see Jesus. Philip tells his fellow-townsmen Andrew; and they two together, Andrew apparently taking the lead, tell Jesus. The answer of Jesus is remarkable. It does not appear whether or not the desire of the Greeks to see him was gratified. But Jesus, in answer to his two disciples, breaks out into a strain of expression not to have been at all forecast for such an occasion. He would almost appear to have recognized in this application from Gentiles to see him a sign from his Father that the end for himself was now indeed nigh at hand. He had an immediate, face-to-face vision of his "hour." He exclaimed, "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified." The being glorified was a sequel to suffering, and a result of that. This is implied in the figure in which the Savior goes on to express himself. What a depth of self-devotion and self-sacrifice is to be discerned in his words! "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." The Lord's prevision of his future did not stop short in his tomb. It took in his own resurrection and the boundless fruit of salvation to others which that event would bear. The Lord remembered, for application to himself, his own instruction to his disciples, and said: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." He would have others do as he was himself doing: "If any man serve me, let him follow me." There should be no separation in place or in lot between the servant and his Master: "Where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will the Father honor." But the solemn joy does not triumph so as not to feel a sinking, a shudder, in prospect of what lay between this and that: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?" The question was like the momentary loss of foothold experienced by a man in fording a stream too deep for his height. The foothold of this Divine-Human struggler was immediately regained: "But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." The bitterness of death was past, when those words could be said. There came a voice out of heaven saying, "I

have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The voice was not so much for Jesus, as for those with him who heard it—in vain! Against what light they sinned, those unbelieving Jews! Yet some, nay, many, even of the rulers, did believe, but they concealed their belief. "For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God."

Those simple, dull-witted, slow-hearted disciples! After all that they had heard, this day and before from Christ, of the doom of Jerusalem, they could not repress their rustic wonder and delight at the magnificence of the temple built as if to last forever, like the hill itself on which it stood. They called the Lord's attention to the immense size of its stones and the splendor of the votive gifts that adorned its façades. This was probably while the Lord, with his disciples, was on his way from Jerusalem to Bethany. The admiring remarks of the disciples became to Jesus the occasion of the longest and the most detailed and specific of all his predictions. "Seest thou these great buildings," said he; "there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." The walk then was perhaps continued, until, on the slope of Olivet over against the temple in full view across the vale of Kidron, the Lord sat down and, on the application of his disciples, resumed his prophetic discourse.

The interpretation of this discourse has always been a matter of much debate with expositors. Some think that, with the destruction of Jerusalem here foretold, was blended, in a manner to leave the two things difficult of separation, the "end of the world" understood in a much larger sense of the expression than that in which this idea is involved in the passing away of the Jewish state. Expositors who hold the view thus described look for a second coming of the Lord yet future. Another interpretation, which has the merit of great simplicity, maintains that the whole prophecy relates exclusively to the Lord's coming for the destruction of Jerusalem and for the various fulfillments associated by him with that great historic event. The sorrow of the Lord's heart, in sympathy for the city so much beloved and so unworthy, breaks out afresh, in tragic hyperbole, the chief tragedy of which is that it is not hyperbole at all but literal statement of fact: "For those days shall be tribulation, such as there hath not been the like from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never shall be." The parable of the Ten Virgins and the parable of the Talents are incorporated in this amazing discourse. An august and awful panorama of the judgment of the great day is made in conclusion to pass before the imagination of hearer or reader, whose ears are left tingling at last with the sound, heard or imagined, of that final, fatal, irreversible sentence, "These shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into eternal life."

It was a contrast amounting almost to a paradox, when, immediately upon the conclusion of a discourse in which he had presented himself in a character of such sublimity as Judge of the world, Jesus proceeded to tell his disciples that after two days the Son of Man was to be delivered up for crucifixion. What absolute self-command and sanity, what undisturbable equipoise of spirit, the conjunction of two things concerning himself so contrasted presupposes in the Speaker! At perhaps the very same moment, the chief priests and the scribes were plotting his death. But they resolved that this should not be until after the feast. "The people" might raise a tumult. Man proposes and God disposes. It was to be *during* the feast, and that by the choice and act of him who was himself the true passover! While Jesus was saying, "The Son of Man is delivered up," Judas, it may be, was darkly meditating his own purpose to deliver him. At any rate, he soon "went away" to the chief priests, and agreed with them to betray his Master for a price.

The last Wednesday was a day to the Lord of which there remains no record on earth. Perhaps he spent it in recovering strength, through pure rest, for the dreadful things that were before him. Perhaps he spent it in communion with his Father better to him, and more strengthening, than rest. Perhaps he spent it in the sweet domesticities of the home that welcomed him in Bethany, there partaking and dispensing the comfort of love. Perhaps he

spent it in giving intimate instructions to his apostles. Perhaps he spent it in some way that mingled and harmonized all these different ends. We can only conjecture, where the silence of history is absolutely unbroken. One feels it almost as a relief to the tense tragedy of the Lord's prophetic mood, when the disciples intervene, as they do from time to time, with their unconscious interpositions of commonplace suggestion. A certain reassuring touch, as of everyday reality, is thus communicated to the overwrought mind. Thursday morning the disciples came to Jesus with the practical question, "Where wilt thou that we make ready for thee to eat the passover?" Jesus with his disciples would constitute what, for the purposes of the feast, would be regarded as a family. And it was in "families," of not less than ten and not more than twenty persons each, that the Jews celebrated their passover. The Lord answered the question asked him, in a manner that seems to imply desire on his part to keep his purposed movements from the immediate knowledge even of his disciples. Perhaps he sought to provide that no premature invasion proceeding from the treachery of Judas should violate his sacred last hours of privacy with his apostles. Peter and John were sent out to make the necessary preparations. They went, not themselves knowing exactly whither they went. They should learn, as they were going, by certain specified signs which they would meet on the way.

"With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer," the Lord said, as, with the coming on of evening, he sat down at the table prepared, with his disciples — that is, the twelve apostles — about him. Judas also was there. It seems incredible, but at that supreme moment for their Lord, those apostles strove with one another for the best places at table with him! They probably thought that the precedent then established might have an important influence on their subsequent relative positions in the "kingdom," when that was full come! We wonder; but we do not wonder wisely, if we only condemn, and do not consider that we ourselves, in those disciples' places, would probably have been not less inclined than they were to do as they did. We might have acted with much discreet disguise of our real motive and spirit; but no disguise would have availed with him.

Jesus taught his poor, foolish, contentious disciples, with an eloquent acted parable of humility and love. Fully knowing at the moment his own divine mission and majesty, his present investiture with universal authority, his late coming hither from God, his speedy going hence to God — with the clear consciousness of these things in his mind, and doubtless with an effect from the consciousness illumining his person and mien, that earthly-sojourning Jehovah rose from supper, and, amid the awe-struck silent amazement of all, laid off his outer garments and took a towel and girded himself. Their Lord was now indeed among those disciples "as he that serveth!" He poured water into the basin — the imagination hears the gentle plash of that water poured out, breaking a stillness like the stillness of a sepulcher! He began to wash the disciples' feet. Such service was one that belonged to the meanest menial of a house. When Peter's turn, which may indeed have come first, was reached, that impulsive and impressionable spirit could not brook to keep silence. "Thou shalt never wash my feet," he exclaimed. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," the Lord replied. And so the round was completed, no omission of any, not even of Judas, from the lowly ministration. "Know ye what I have done to you?" the Lord inquired, when, with his garments resumed, he sat down again; "Ye call me, Master, and, Lord; and ye say well, for so I am. . . . I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you." He continued this strain of affectionate inculcation, intermingling admonition apparently intended for the special heed of Judas. There was no sign of relenting or repenting in that obdurate breast. But the tender heart of the Lord still beat itself against it in resisted appeal. The appeal resisted bruised the heart that made it, though on the heart that resisted, it wrought no impression. We are expressly told that Jesus "was troubled in spirit and testified." This language imports a peculiarly wounded and suffering mind. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you



BIDA.

THE TREACHERY OF JUDAS.

shall betray me," were the words he spoke. The disciples looked one on another doubting of whom he spoke. There was then still a chance for Judas. He was not yet exposed as a traitor. As far as the company there present were concerned, the secret remained between himself and his Lord. If only he had felt the appeal thus made and recoiled from his crime! Even then, even then! But no. No wavering appears of that foul and fell resolve. Jesus adds one further word of warning. Will Judas, *can* Judas, still resist? "Woe unto that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had not been born." It was a boding knell sounded as if from the undisclosed recesses of the world to come. It must make the traitor blench. He did not so much as hear it! He had deafened his soul! While he had ears to hear, he did not hear; and his power of hearing was now gone. Judas had the horrible coolness to ask, "Is it I, Rabbi?" There was no further hope. And Jesus answered, "Thou hast said." This was perhaps in a low tone, and not heard by the rest of the company. But to them, too, Jesus gave a sign by which they also understood who the traitor was.

Up to this moment, it was probably still in Judas's mind not to betray his Master until after the feast. But the Lord was to suffer *as* the passover, and it should be at the time of the passover. He said in an undertone to Judas, "That thou doest, do quickly." This was after Satan had entered into Judas, not by force, but as Judas's own invited guest. The Lord's words were an urgency, not to do, but not to delay. Judas's crime was already irreversibly committed in Judas's soul. It remained only to reveal his crime in act. And that revelation must be immediate. So the Lord willed it, and so it was. Judas went out straightway; and it was night. A symbolic night!

There is hopeless disagreement among Biblical students as to whether or not Judas was present when our Lord, on the night on which he was betrayed, instituted the observance of the Supper in memorial of himself. This, on the occasion of its institution, was in a manner grafted upon the passover meal. "This is my body which is given for you," the Lord said, when he broke the loaf. "This is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many," the Lord said, when he gave the cup containing "fruit of the vine" to his disciples. The memorial of himself was to be forever a memorial of a suffering Savior, a Savior suffering vicariously. When they had sung a hymn—the one hundred eighteenth psalm was the customary closing hymn for passover occasions—they went out into the Mount of Olives. Either while on his way to this retreat of his, or else while lingering still, seated perhaps at first, and afterward standing, together with his disciples, in that chosen upper room, Jesus uttered discourse, reported only by John, which, from its peculiarly intimate quality, has been not inaptly called the "holy of holies" of Scripture. This discourse is found in the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth chapters of John's Gospel. At the end of the fourteenth chapter, occur the words, "Arise, let us go hence," which may mark a point at which the position of all was changed from sitting to standing. The thought, it may be, was to go out then at once; but last words welled up so in the overflowing fountain of that unfathomable affectionate heart, that he delayed starting, in order to utter them more at leisure, in the quiet and seclusion where he was. This discourse, with the prayer forming as it were a part of it, cannot be here reproduced. It has an ineffable quality of purity and depth in which the intellectual and the spiritual elements so blend that they seem to be the same, the one interchangeably becoming the other. There is nothing else like it in literature. The utterances of Socrates about to die, as reported by Plato, come nearest resembling it. But they approach resemblance only as the highest merely human can approach the incarnate divine.

When the farewell discourse of the Lord died away in the cadences of that heavenly prayer, the hour could not have been far from midnight. According to our manner of dividing time, it was already perhaps Friday when the little band reached the place called Gethsemane, on the western slope of Olivet. The story of that Friday belongs in a chapter by itself.

CHAPTER XXIII.

GETHSEMANE.

FRIDAY began to the Lord with an hour of darkness and agony. "Sit ye here," he said to his disciples, on entering the wooded seclusion ("garden," so-called) of Gethsemane, "while I go yonder and pray." He retired a little way, taking with him Peter, James, and John. The human heart in him desired the conscious touch and support of human sympathy. He told the chosen three, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." This is a very different tone from the serene courage of Socrates's cheerful welcome to death. There is but one explanation of the difference that can save the credit of Jesus as a man to be compared with Socrates for fortitude of spirit. That explanation, however, is simple, and it is sufficient. Socrates had only the burden of his own personal fate to bear; Jesus bore the weight of the sins of the world. Jesus must have sustaining help that no human sympathy could give him. From even those three preferred of his disciples, he withdrew while he should pray alone. He fell on his face—no posture other than that would suit the utter prostration of his spirit. We know the prayer that he prayed. It was prayer for deliverance from what was before him to bear: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." It was an unspeakable agony of recoil. It almost equaled—it did not quite equal—the counter agony of submission. The throe and wrestle of that agony would have drained his strength; it *did* drain his strength; but his strength was replenished by an angel from heaven. And now the pressure of his agony forced from him a sweat that became as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Thrice he interrupted his prayer by return to his disciples, where he had asked them to stay and watch with him. Each time he found them sleeping—witness less of their unfaithfulness to their Master than of the strain to which they had themselves been subjected through that week of trial and this night of vigil. With gentle rally to their spirits, the Lord hid, without wholly hiding, his own disappointment in missing the human sympathy he longed for; and at length he said, "Arise, let us be going; behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand."

At the head of a band of men with lanterns and torches and weapons, Judas was coming to find his Master. He well knew the Lord's habit of resorting to this place. The time was that of full moon, but the night may have been clouded and dark. Or there may have been, with the Lord's enemies, a suspicion that, to escape apprehension, he would secrete himself in some one of the caves with which the region abounded. Hence the lanterns and torches. The preconcerted sign was a kiss from Judas to Jesus, to indicate which one of all to arrest. The traitor had exhorted his employers to make sure of their prisoner. Jesus went forth calmly to meet his captors. "Whom seek ye?" said he. "Jesus of Nazareth," they said. "I am he," the Lord replied. Whether they did not quite trust Judas's kiss, or whether, in the uncertain light, they had not seen it, or whether there was something in the demeanor of Jesus that dazed them and bewildered their wits, those soldiers and officers were apparently not yet assured of their man. But on the Lord's announcement of himself, they, instead of advancing at once to seize him, went backward and fell on the ground. Judas seems to have been among those that fell. Again Jesus asked them, "Whom seek ye?" They had doubtless recovered themselves. They said again, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said, "I told you that I am he." The loyal disciples were at first minded to resist. One of them in fact—from John we know that it was Peter—drew his sword, and, making a thrust with it, severed the right ear from a servant of the high priest. Malchus, John tells us, the name of this servant was. Peter's demonstration apparently was made at the moment of the first actual laying of hostile hands on the Lord.

Jesus gently reproved the act, saying to Peter, "The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Then, in the words, "Suffer ye thus far," meekly asking or majestically claiming leave from his captors to perform this healing service before submitting to be bound, he touched the wounded ear and made it whole. "Thinkest thou," the Lord added, to his wrongly zealous disciple, "that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" The Lord's reverence, so absolute, for the Scriptures — does it not sometimes seem almost less that of one who merely believed them as the word of another, than that of one who acknowledged them as his own word? His behavior here is as if he felt not only his filial obedience but his personal veracity to be pledged to their fulfillment. At the supreme moment, the crisis, of his agony in obedience as Son, he remembered what was foretold and promised concerning him in Scripture. That to him was the end of all human doubt, of all human hesitation. The "hour" was come, and Jesus would no longer postpone the inevitable end.

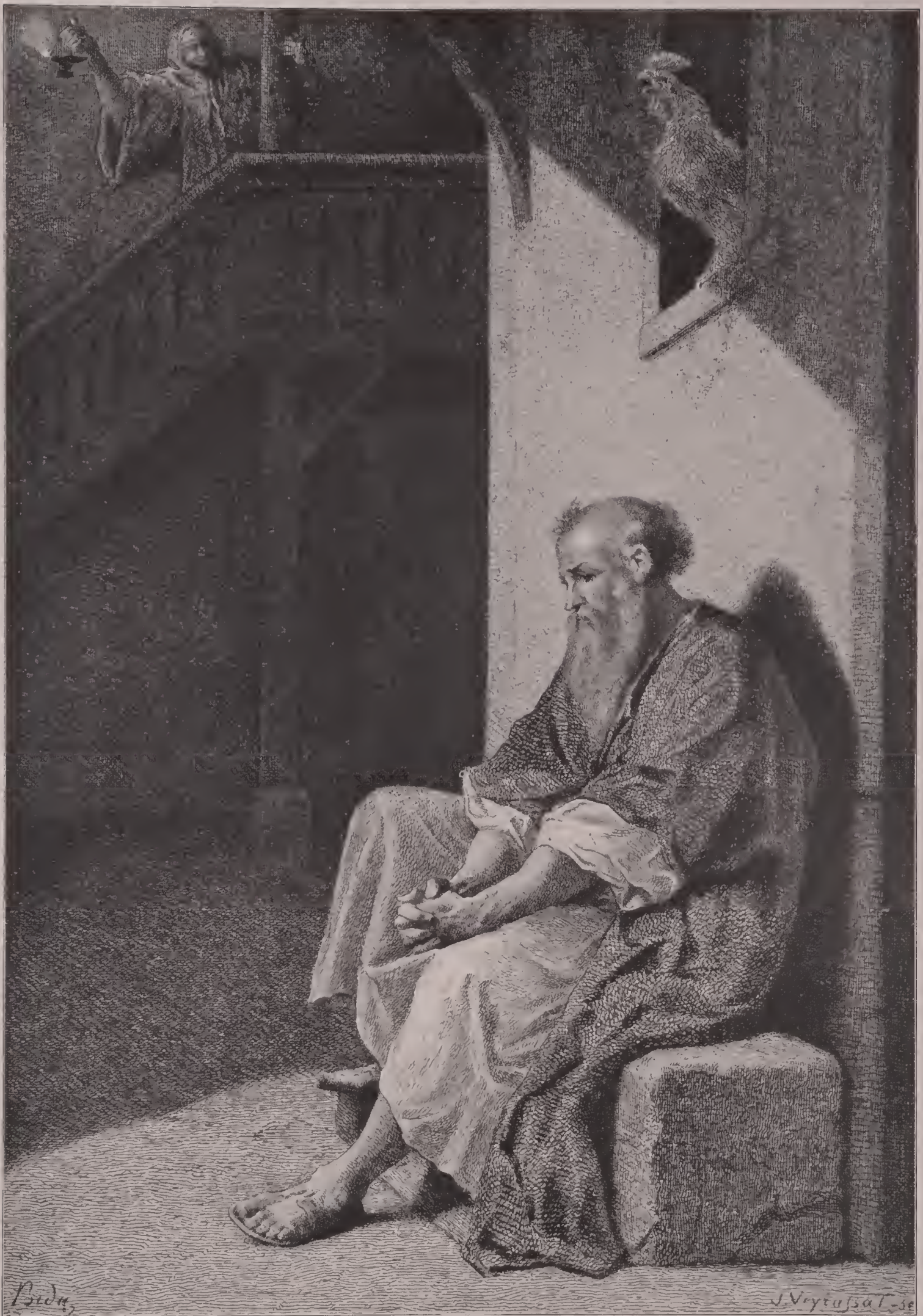
Their Lord, then, was going to submit to this arrest! The disciples conceived a sudden panic. They all forsook him and fled. All! Not even that valiant drawer of the sword remained. They had, indeed, received a kind of dismissal from the Lord himself; for he said to his captors, "Let these go their way." We cannot wonder at the disciples' behavior.

To the chief priests and elders in that midnight crowd, Jesus said: "Are ye come out, as against a robber, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched not forth your hands against me." This reminded his enemies how helpless they found themselves against him as long as it was the Father's will that he should go in and out before them unharmed. "But this is your hour," the Lord said to them, "and the power of darkness." The kingdom of Satan was permitted now to do its worst against him who had come to destroy it. It failed in nothing that in these last hours it attempted against Christ, *except* to shake the steadfastness of his filial obedience to his Father.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"MORE MARRED THAN ANY MAN."

THE band seized Jesus and bound him. They took him first to Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas the high priest; and then from Annas to the high priest Caiaphas himself — this, however, not apparently until after an informal preliminary examination of the prisoner. ("Apparently," we feel obliged to say; for comparison of the four Gospel accounts brings it into some doubt whether what John relates as if it occurred before Annas, was really meant by him to be so understood. Some students hold that it occurred before Caiaphas; and that we have no report of what passed before Annas.) Peter had rallied enough to follow his Master at a distance; and with him came also another disciple, presumably John, to the high priest's house to see the end. The high priest — whether Annas or Caiaphas uncertain, both the two men seeming to have borne that title — asked Jesus of his disciples and of his teaching. Jesus answered in effect: "Thou needst not ask *me*. I never taught secretly. Ask those who have heard me teach." This reply was construed as disrespectful. One of the officers commended his own zeal on behalf of authority by striking Jesus, at the same time saying, "Answerest thou the high priest so?" Jesus remonstrates: "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?"



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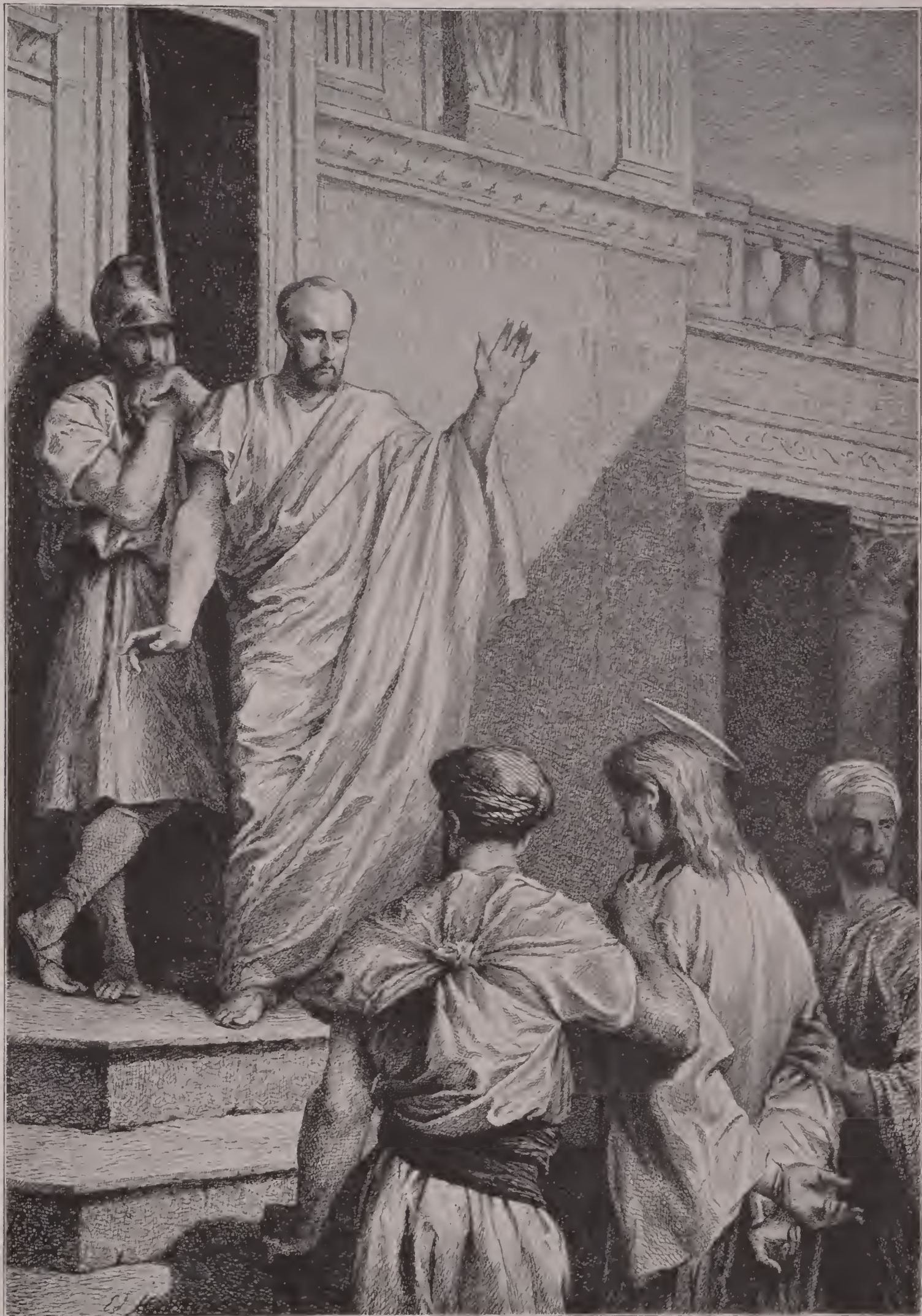
PETER'S REPENTANCE.

Peter, by coming to the high priest's house, had prepared for himself a dreadful temptation. He sat among the officers, warming himself, as they were warming themselves, by a charcoal fire which they had lighted in the court; for the weather was cold. There he was three times charged with being a disciple of Jesus; and there three times did Peter, though hero enough to take the risk of thus exposing himself, prove also coward and liar enough to say and swear that he was not Jesus' disciple, that he did not even know the man! While he was uttering the last dreadful imprecation and perjury, a shrill clear sound smote inward from without upon the fallen apostle's ear. It was the crowing of a cock that marked the coming on of dawn. Peter was cut to the heart with that sound. He remembered how, when, but a few hours before, he was confidently vaunting his own eternal fidelity to his Master, that Master had told him, "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Besides, the Lord had now turned and looked on Peter. Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Meantime, the rulers had already unanimously condemned the Lord to death. With this foregone murderous purpose in their mind, they had sought false witness against him; but they had not succeeded in finding any plausible enough to make even a specious case for justification of the capital sentence they were predetermined to pronounce upon him. The Lord himself supplied the witness that was wanting. The high priest formally asked him, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus no longer avoided the direct answer. His "hour" was come, and he said: "I am: and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." This was what they sought. The high priest, in a paroxysm of hypocritic horror, rent his clothes and said to his fellow assessors: "Ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?" They, of course, thought as he thought; and they passed their sentence. The wicked excess of their passion was then displayed. Some spat on Jesus, covered his face, and, giving him blows, said, "Prophecy; who is he that struck thee?" They treated him with every oriental device of truculence and scorn.

With the dawning of the day, the council (that is, the Sanhedrim) met in full frequency, and considered what to do, or rather how to do what they had already resolved upon doing. This second meeting, by daylight, was necessary in order to legalize their proceedings. The pretended trial proper now began. They had Jesus brought before them, and they gave him a second opportunity, which he embraced, "witnessing a good confession," to declare himself in express terms in his true character. An unexpected incident, with a ghastly sequel, thrust itself into the course of the proceedings. Judas came to the chief priests and elders with his thirty pieces of silver. These burned his hand now. He could not hold them. The traitor told his employers, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they freezingly replied; "see thou to it." No comfort from that quarter—if peradventure Judas had hoped that his confession might undo what his treachery had done. He flung his burning thirty pieces of silver into the sanctuary of the temple and went away. But he carried with him a burning memory in his heart. There was no riddance possible of that. But was there none? Might he not have gone to the despised and rejected Jesus and found forgiveness? Satan in him had got his purpose served by him. That hard master would now torment his human tool with remorse; but he would not suffer him to find healing in true repentance. The maddened man was driven to suicide. It was a hideous suicide. Judas hanged himself; but that was not all. He fell from where he hung, and, cut perhaps as he fell with a point of jagged rock, burst asunder in the midst, his bowels gushing from the gaping wound. If one could hope that Judas's punishment ended *then*!

The decision of the council was to get Pilate, the Roman governor, to do their bloody work for them. They led Jesus to him. At first they were disposed to carry matters before Pilate with a high hand. To his question, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" they answered loftily. "If this man were not a malefactor, we should not have delivered him up



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JESUS BEFORE PILATE.

unto thee." Pilate was a weak man, but this style of browbeating was too open; it did not succeed. The governor told the Jews, with a sarcasm which they in their helpless national dependence, must have keenly felt, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." This the Jews knew they could not do, at least not with that result to the prisoner which they desired—it being unlawful for them to inflict a capital penalty without express leave from Rome. So they condescended to frame an accusation. It was an accusation craftily enough contrived. The prisoner, they said, had set himself up for king. Pilate asked Jesus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus confessed that he was. There was probably something in the manner of the confession, something in the manner of the man himself, that put Pilate at a loss. Jesus did not appear like a vulgar, ambitious, seditious pretender to kingly right. Indeed, he had already explained to Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world. "Thou art a king then?" asked Pilate, sincerely mystified. Jesus assented, but said that he was come into the world to bear witness to the truth. "Truth!" "The Truth!" The Roman world was a world of doubt, of skepticism. Pilate but represented it fairly, when he asked, incredulously, "What is truth?" The Jews' case began to look doubtful. The chief priests strengthened it with added accusations, to which Jesus made no reply. Pilate was further staggered at this silence of the prisoner. He asked, "Answerest thou nothing?" Even to Pilate, asking this, Jesus made not a syllable of reply. The governor was hopelessly nonplussed. Still, the result was that he told the Jews, "I find no crime in him." But the Jews did. They insisted. In the course of their insistence, it came out that Jesus was a Galilean. That suggested an expedient. Pilate would send the prisoner away to Herod, ruler of Galilee, who, happily, was at that moment in the city. Herod was pleased with his opportunity to see Jesus. Such an opportunity he had long wished. He was curious to witness some wonder from this wonder-worker's hand. The result was a complete disappointment to his hopes; it was more; it was a deep wound to his pride. Not even one word could the monarch, with all his questions, elicit from the prisoner. To the Jews also, they meanwhile pressing their charges against him, Jesus was equally dumb. Herod took his revenge, a revenge worthy of his royal house, by heaping ignominies on this silent prisoner. He with his soldiers arrayed him in showy apparel and sent him back to Pilate. The two rulers, before at strife, became friends that day.

Pilate had the accused man on his hands again. He summoned the Jews and told them that Herod agreed with him in finding Jesus innocent. He would therefore—"therefore"—chastise the prisoner and release him. But the Jews were thirsty for more blood than the lash would cause to flow. The multitude, in their inconsequent way, began to clamor for a certain exercise of clemency on Pilate's part which they had come to expect as their right. It was usual, as an annual act of governmental grace, to discharge on popular demand some prisoner at the feast of the passover. Pilate bethought himself of an alternative. "Whom will ye that I release unto you," said he, "Barabbas, or Jesus, who is called Christ?" (There is some reason for supposing that this Barabbas also bore the name of "Jesus." The question would then be, "Which Jesus?") Barabbas was one of a number of men then in prison accused of sedition and murder. Pilate hoped for relief to come from this alternative. He was becoming more and more deeply involved. His wife had contributed to the distracted governor's perplexity by sending word to her husband on the judgment-seat of an ill dream she had had. She warned him to do nothing against "that righteous man." "Which will ye have?" Pilate asked. The multitude, set on by the rulers, scandalized Pilate by crying out, "Barabbas!" "And Jesus the Christ—what shall I do with him?" asked the helpless governor. The answer was prompt, and loud, and many-voiced, "Crucify him!" *That* dreadful doom! Pilate was horrified. "Why, what evil hath he done?" But the multitude were wild. They only cried out the more, "Let him be crucified?" Pilate was horror-struck before; he was panic-struck now. The multitude cowed him and he yielded. He performed a theatric ceremony to



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JESUS DELIVERED TO THE SOLDIERS.

clear himself. He took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it." Such blood clings like a mordant to the hand that sheds it. An ocean of water would not wash it away. The people were beside themselves. They were judicially mad. They answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children." It was a dreadful imprecation upon themselves. God the Avenger required that blood a hundred thousand fold at their hands. On the very spot where they cried those words, they and their children drenched the street to a river with their own blood.

Pilate discharged Barabbas, and Jesus he first scourged and then delivered to be crucified. An orgy now of brutal insolence and cruelty. They stripped Jesus of his raiment and put on him a robe of scarlet (or of purple). They plaited a crown of thorns and pressed it on his brow. Into his hand they thrust a reed for scepter, and mockingly knelt before him, crying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat upon him. Snatching his reed-scepter from his hand, they smote him with it on his head. This riot and revel of wanton wickedness passed within the court of the palace. Pilate now brought the Meek Sufferer out and showed him to the multitude. The purple robe was on him and the crown of thorns. The sacred violated flesh trembled and ran blood beneath the folds of that mock-imperial vestment. "Behold, the man!" the governor said. Perhaps Pilate thought that even yet the piteous sight would move the mob to compassion. And perhaps it did. But the "chief priests and officers" were implacable. They now screamed—apparently they alone—"Crucify him! Crucify him!" They were in haste to forestall any relenting on the part of the people. Pilate recoiled from the crime proposed. Again he resorted to his sarcasm, "Take him yourselves and crucify him." The Jews' case looked bad. In their desperation, they let slip what their real ground of offense in Jesus was. "He made himself the Son of God," they said. That escape from their lips worked against them. The governor was alarmed by it. He went into his palace, taking Jesus with him, and asked, "Whence art thou?" He perhaps had a qualm of superstitious fear. He might be dealing with a veiled divinity. But Jesus made no reply. Pilate was vexed as well as mystified. He tried browbeating his prisoner. "Knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee?" he asked. "Thou wouldst have no power against me," said Jesus, "except it were given thee from above. Therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin." Pilate was increasingly anxious to release this mysterious prisoner. The Jews, driven to extremity, urged their last plea. "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend." It was a virtual threat to accuse Pilate before the Emperor Tiberius; a dangerous man he to offend, with his morbid jealousy of prerogative. Pilate hesitated no longer, though still paltering in a few weak and peevish attempts to save his dignity in yielding. He brought Jesus out once more and said, "Behold, your King!" For answer, they yelled like one many-mouthed wild beast of prey thirsty for blood, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" "Crucify your King?" mocked Pilate. Those proud abjects, the chief priests, ate the very dust of servility in order to gratify their lust of innocent blood. "We have no king but Cæsar," they cried. It was a singular fulfillment of prophetic words: "They gape upon me with their mouth as a ravening and a roaring lion." The soldiers led Jesus away to be crucified.



BIDA.

THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CROSS.

BETWEEN sentence and execution no time intervened. It was murder rather than execution. They loaded upon Jesus the cross on which he was to suffer, and compelled him to bear it to the place chosen by them for the perpetration of their crime. This was without the city gate. The name of it was Golgotha, "the Place of a Skull." On the way thither, the Savior perhaps fainted under his burden. Or, it may be that a horrible brutality of mirthful whim seize the crowd, prompting them to a wanton demonstration without cause. However it was, the cross was put upon another than Jesus to bear. A man of Cyrene coming from the country — his name is saved to perpetual memory, it was Simon — was pressed into the service. This Simon is noted by Mark as father of Alexander and Rufus, who were no doubt in Mark's time well-known disciples. Simon was perhaps himself a disciple. He may have testified his sympathy for his suffering Lord, and thus incurred the penalty (which in that case he would welcome) of bearing for Jesus a burden too great for Jesus' overtasked strength.

It was a mixed procession that followed Jesus to Golgotha. In it were many women, who bewailed and lamented him. The Lord turned to these and said, with heart-breaking tenderness in which no self-pity mingled: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children!" The image of that future for Jerusalem haunted his prophetic mind like a specter of blood! With Jesus were led two others, malefactors, to crucifixion. Jesus was fully human, he was exquisitely human. The shame of his death was much to him. He shrank from it with indescribable recoil. Yet his victory over it was complete. It was present as an element of bitterness in his cup; it had to be reckoned; yet he "despised" it. He did not escape it; it was there; but he despised it. The pain, too, was horrible. It was a lingering death, the death of the cross. The victim survived in unrelieved suffering sometimes for days. On either side of Jesus, fixed each to his wood, hung the two malefactors that were to die in company with him this long death of anguish. The slow process began.

It was probably as the work of fastening the Savior to his cross went on, that he uttered those words of superhuman grace, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." If the prisoner had been treated, as in so-called Christian countries it is usual for condemned prisoners to be treated, with a certain measure of consideration and kindness; if the executioners had shown a compassionate reluctance to proceed with their office — the forgiving spirit exhibited by Jesus would have been less remarkable. But it was against every imaginable and unimaginable expedient of malignant exasperation already practised upon him; in prospect, too, of a prolonged continuance of such torment added to the unavoidable agonies of death by crucifixion — it was in the face of all this, that Jesus kept the unalterable sweetness of his good will toward his murderers, and prayed that prayer for them. A potion mixed of wine and gall was given the sufferer to drink, perhaps to relieve his sense of pain. Jesus tasted but would not drink it. By prescription, the garments of the crucified belonged to the four soldiers detailed to perform the executioners' task. There, then, the soldiers that crucified Jesus sat, and watching meanwhile the dreadful tragedy divided up the prize among themselves. The coat, or tunic, they cast lots for, whose it should be; it was a seamless garment, and, "Let us not rend it," they said. John notes in this a fulfillment of Scripture.

The spectacle of those three sufferers on their crosses drew curious beholders. These were mostly hard-hearted, at least as toward Jesus. They regarded the fate that had now befallen him as a sufficient refutation of the claims that he had made for himself. They railed at him accordingly. Their taunts were directed with what they felt to be deadly aim. "Ha!" they



BIDA.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

derisively cried, "Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself and come down from the cross." The triumphant chief priests and elders took their fill of sweet revenge. "He saved others," they exclaimed; "himself he cannot save. . . . Let him now come down from the cross and we will believe on him." Passers-by joined in the ribald mockery. Nay, the companions of his doom, those robbers on either side of him, taunted their fellow-sufferer, saying, "Art not thou the Christ? Save thyself and us." But if both malefactors joined in this, one of them relented, and even reproached his fellow in crime and in punishment for continuing to insult the crucified Lord. More—his repentance and his faith rose to the height of a prayer to the Lord, uttered at the very moment of that Lord's nethermost humiliation and shame: "Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." Jesus' promise in response went beyond the penitent's prayer: "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

There were faithful women standing by the cross of Jesus. Of these, one was Mary his mother. She realized now the meaning of those words of aged Simeon in the temple: "A sword shall pierce through thine own soul." That lacerated mother-heart! But it should be comforted with a last testimony of love from her Son. A testimony that would draw healing tears in fresh flood from her eyes! Jesus saw his mother, and, standing by her, that disciple whom he loved. He spoke to her. The words were few, and they were mere words, not a sentence; but they uttered all a mighty heart. "Woman," said he, "behold, thy son!" The hand might have pointed, had it not been nailed to the wood, toward John, the beloved disciple, who was meant. To that disciple Jesus said, "Behold, thy mother!" The commendation was understood and responded to. From that time, John took Mary to his own home.

The crucifixion began, it seems likely, at about nine o'clock in the morning. At full noon a darkness overspread the land which lasted three hours. It was as if the earth, in mourning, put on sackcloth of black; it was as if the sun in heaven refused longer to behold that wickedness of man. At about three o'clock in the afternoon, a strange cry, the most lamentable ever heard on earth, proceeded from the lips of Jesus. "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" were the words. The meaning was, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The words are the words of a psalm, the twenty-second. As uttered by the Lord, they mark an experience on his part that we shall perhaps never, either here or hereafter, fully understand. That experience, it may well be supposed, was the element in the cup of the Lord's sufferings which he most of all dreaded. There is no record of any reassuring answer descending now, as twice before such answer had descended, from heaven. That sinless soul, sin-bearing, was apparently suffered to endure this sense of being forsaken by his God, without communication from above to relieve to him the unimaginable horror of it. That cup could not pass from him except he drank it. Eternity was crowded into a moment of time. But the cup passed—when he had drunk it. "I thirst!" he cried. A sponge dipped in vinegar was raised on a reed to his lips. He did not refuse it. He cried, not feebly as if his strength were exhausted, but with a loud voice, and now a very different cry. "It is finished," he said; and, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." With these words, so uttered, the Lord bowed his head and gave up his spirit. No man took it from him, but he gave it up of himself.

And the veil of the temple (a curtain which hid the holy of holies from the eyes, much more, barred it from the feet, of men) was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. Access into the holiest of all was thenceforward by the blood of him forever open to every child of Adam that would come.

Jesus had now died, in manner as he often foretold that he should. Will he rise again, in manner as he often foretold?

William Cleaver Wilkinson.

BOOK XIII.

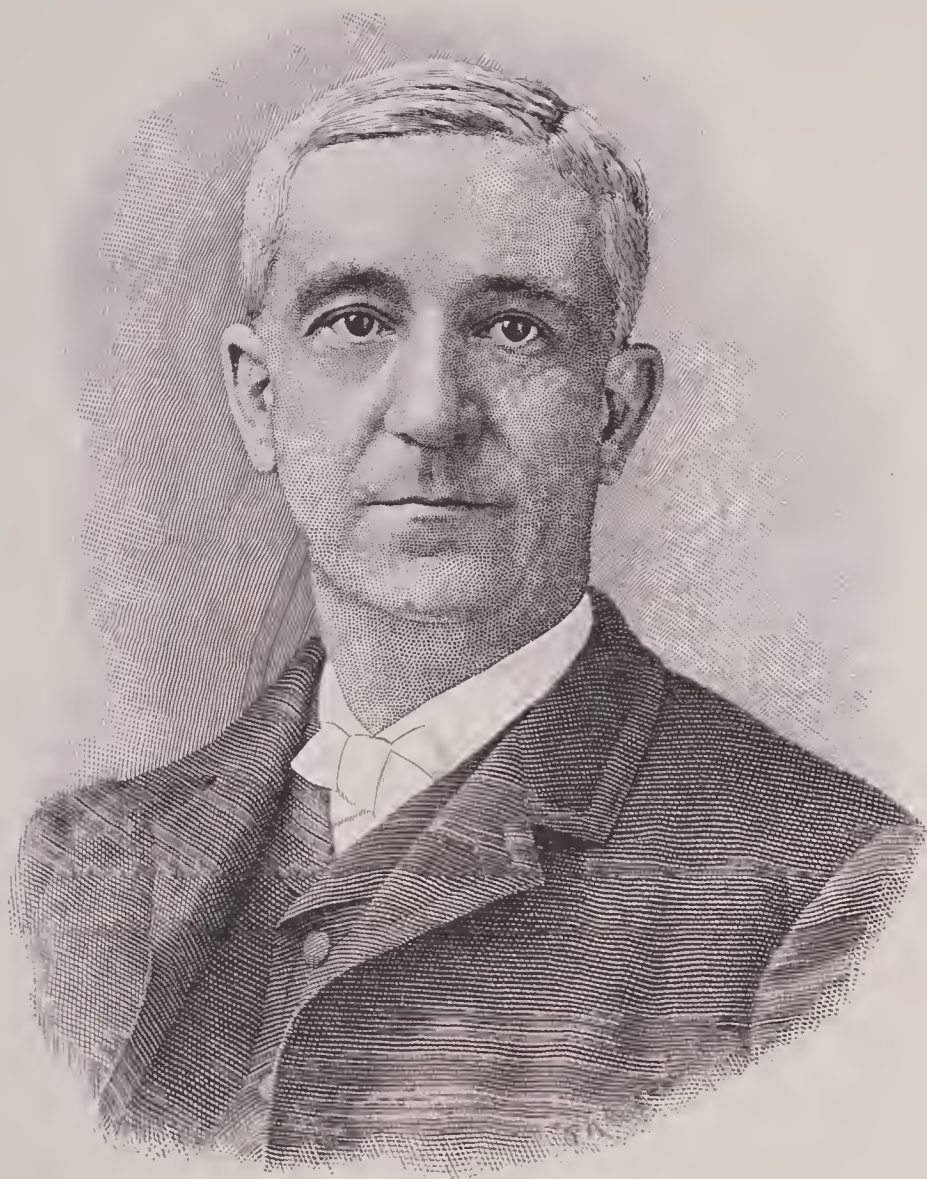
FROM THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS TO THE ASCENT TO THE THRONE

BY

✓
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Truly Yours,
Samuel B. East.

BOOK XIII.

FROM THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS TO THE ASCENT TO THE THRONE.

CHAPTER I.

THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS.

THE Lord's death had taken place some little time before the hour of sunset. It was the custom of the Romans, except in the country of the Jews, to leave those who were crucified to die of the exhaustion and agony, often greatly prolonged, of this terrible method of punishment; and then, after death had ensued, the bodies were left upon the crosses until they dropped off or were devoured by ravenous birds. But the Jewish law was explicit, that the body of no person who was "hanged on a tree" should be allowed to remain there until the setting of the sun.¹ As the phrase was originally used, it did not refer to the crucifying of a living body, for this method of execution was unknown at that time; but it had reference to the custom of exposing on a gibbet the bodies of those who had been executed in some other way. But when the Roman power made itself felt over the Jews, and crucifixion was introduced as a method of inflicting capital punishment upon slaves and others who had not the privilege of Roman citizenship, this provision of the ancient law was held to apply to the crucified. And the Romans, who had the wisdom to respect local prejudices and to allow the continuance of local customs among the nations whom they conquered, and who seem to have been particularly anxious not to offend unnecessarily the scruples of the Jews, had granted permission that in Palestine those who were crucified should be killed, and their bodies removed from the crosses, before the evening. On the day when the Lord suffered, the Jews would have felt it especially necessary that advantage should be taken of this permission to obey their law. That was the very day of the Passover; and the following day would be the sabbath, and not only that, but the sabbath in the Passover week, an especially "high day," which must on no account be profaned. In good season, then, the Jewish officials went to the Roman governor, and asked him that the three persons crucified that day by his order might be killed and their bodies taken away before the land should be defiled by them. Pilate at once sent soldiers with instructions to hasten the death of those who were hanging on the crosses. They found the two robbers, as they expected, alive; and with sharp blows of clubs they broke the bones of their legs. This made it impossible for them any longer to lift their bodies, to relax the tension of the muscles, or to give the blood an impulse through the heart; the impure blood could not be forced to the lungs and purified there; and death soon ensued. But when the soldiers came to Jesus, they saw that he had died after but a few hours' suffering on the cross; there was no need that the bones of that worn body, which had so soon yielded to death, should be broken. But one of the soldiers stretched out his spear, lifting it but little (for the feet of the crucified were not raised far above the ground), and pierced the Lord's side. Saint John was standing by, and

¹ Deuteronomy xxi, 22, 23.

he saw blood and water flowing from the wound; and when he wrote his Gospel, he declared with great earnestness the truth of the record that he made in regard to it.

What were the blood and the water that thus flowed from the Savior's side when it was pierced, and why the beloved disciple felt it necessary to lay such stress on the fact, we cannot say. It may well be that it was an indication that his death, though verily and indeed death and a separation of the vital union of soul and body, was yet unlike all other instances of death, in that his flesh saw no corruption. The victory was assured, when the depth of humiliation was reached by death; and, if we may so speak, the holy body was already preparing for its resurrection while the soul was in the abode of departed spirits. Already the bodies of sleeping saints, Saint Matthew tells us, had arisen, though they might not come out of their graves till after his resurrection. The world of the living and the world of the dead had been shaken when the Savior of all bowed his head and gave up the ghost; and in some way it was a proof of the wondrousness of this death that blood and water flowed from the wounded side. And yet, and perhaps even primarily, this was a proof that death had actually taken place, that the Lord did not merely swoon from exhaustion, and that it was not because the soldiers' clubs spared his limbs that he rose from his grave and was seen of men so soon. "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews"—for so the mocking title still read, fastened above his head, a mocking title, but true in its every word—had died. Those who came to make sure that Pilate's sentence was carried out had no doubt of it; and there was not the slightest room for doubt after the soldier had made a wound in the side so large that Saint Thomas afterward spoke of putting his hand into it, as he spoke of putting his finger into the print of the nails that had fastened the hands to the cross. The report of the soldiers, as we shall see, was soon made; doubtless due record was entered, and Pontius Pilate was presently thinking of the credit that he would gain at Rome when the official dispatch, in which he was to tell how he had administered justice that day and had executed a pretended King of the Jews, should reach Tiberius.

We may assume that the bodies of the two robbers were given a hasty interment in some place for the burial of strangers, such as that which was soon afterwards bought with the money paid for the innocent blood that had just been shed. But the humiliation of Christ, the Son of God, was not to last beyond his death. Already courage returned—or, perhaps, we had better say, was strengthened—in the case of some of his disciples and friends. Saint John had come back to the cross after he had led the awed mother of the Lord to his own home in the city. The Lord's acquaintances had stood afar off, looking on in wonder and sorrow, chief among them three of the faithful women who had ministered to him in Galilee and come with him to Jerusalem. And, if they were not among these, word soon came to two men whose names will ever be held in honor for that which they did for Christ when they could have had no hope of reward or even of recognition from him. One of them was Joseph of the city of Arimathea, hitherto a secret disciple of the Lord's, but now (most strange and yet most natural) emboldened by his seeming defeat and his death; a good and just man, a rich and honored member of that Jewish council which had declared the Lord Jesus worthy of death because he had asserted that he was the Son of God, but a member who had not given his consent to the action that they had taken and the decision that they had reached. He "took courage," Saint Matthew says, and went into the palace of the Roman governor, though the act defiled him for keeping further the great feast of his people, and presented a petition that the body of Jesus of Nazareth, about to be taken from a cross, might be given to him. It happened that the report of the soldiers had not yet been brought to Pilate, and he thought it hardly probable that anyone had died so soon after being led out to crucifixion. When, however, he was assured that death had taken place, he gave the body to the honorable man who had asked for it. With Joseph went also one of the Pharisees, Nicodemus, of whom we do not know that he had been even secretly a disciple in the full sense of the word, but who had come to our Lord by night on the occasion of his first



JOSEPH OF ARIMATHÆA.

visit to Jerusalem in the time of his ministry, who had professed then his belief that Christ was a teacher sent from God, and who had had with him a memorable conversation dealing with great mysteries. And now he also came as a professed disciple of him who had died a malefactor's death, uniting with the rich Arimathean in the determination that by the honor of the burial something, at least, should be taken away from the ignominy of the crucifixion. Joseph bought fine linen cloth (for the sabbath had not yet begun), and Nicodemus brought about a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes. The body must be hastily prepared for burial before the fast-declining sun had set; it was wrapped in the linen with the spices, according to Jewish custom, the head being specially bound with a napkin, as in the case of Lazarus. It was not necessary to go far to find a tomb; the place of crucifixion was of necessity outside of the walls, and close by was a garden, or small park, of which Joseph owned at least a portion. There, in a natural cave, as it would seem, he had cut out a place for burial; but as yet no dead body had been laid in it. In this new tomb, therefore, "wherein never man yet had been laid," in one of the recesses cut in the walls of the inner cave, was laid the sacred Body of the Lord tightly wrapped in the grave-clothes which held the myrrh and aloes that had been so abundantly provided. Thus giving all possible honor to the dead Christ, Joseph caused a great stone to be moved up to the door of the cave, so that no one could easily enter, and went away. Mary Magdalen and the other Mary waited till all was done; they then went to their homes, and made preparation of spices and ointment, that they might more carefully prepare the body for its final rest in the tomb. And so the shadows fell upon the earth, and the great sabbath day began.

It is beyond the scope of this article to enter into the controversy as to the place of the burial. We know that it must have been without the city wall; but we are not absolutely certain whether the wall, in our Lord's time, ran within or without the site now occupied by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It is the opinion of the writer that the evidence available points to the acceptance of the ordinary tradition, and to the belief that this church does mark the place where the Lord's body was laid.

CHAPTER II.

THE GREAT SABBATH.

IT was truly the great sabbath, as it was in strictness of speech the last sabbath of the world's history: the Lord's day of rest, after the conflict of life and of death, after the struggle with evil and with temptation; yet even for him, as shall be presently noted, not a day of inactivity or of mere expectation. It was a strange day of rest to the disciples, all more or less dazed at that which they had witnessed during the past few hours; and if faith remained in but a few, sorrow, we may well believe, began to quicken love in many. We may think of how that holy day — so full of grief and yet bringing the blessing of a restful quiet — was spent by the Blessed Mother and Saint John, by the penitent Peter, by the devoted women, by the body of the apostles who probably kept their lodging for the Passover-time in the upper room from which they had gone with the Lord to the place of his agony, and by the other disciples. Perhaps some of them united with the devout Jews who were not disciples in the sacred observances that belonged to the Passover Sabbath, partly with wonder, partly with fear or hope.

But the chief priests and the Pharisees, the bitter enemies who seemed to have gained a final victory over him who called himself the Christ and the Son of God, could not rest on that

holy day. They were not able to repress the fear that all that they had succeeded in doing might yet be in vain. They had heard rumors that he whom they had crucified had declared that he should die and on the third day should rise from death; or, as what they said to Pilate seems rather to imply, they had heard some declaration of his which they thus understood. Now, we know of no words of Christ, spoken in the hearing of the rulers and Pharisees, in which he expressly said that he should rise from the dead on the third day; it is hardly possible that they came to understand the words which he spoke to them at the first passover of his ministry, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"; and Saint John is careful to assure us that they did not then understand him. But at any rate, with that fear which belongs to all who are struggling against the truth and are determined not to be convinced, they resolved to make it impossible that any report should be spread abroad to the effect that there had been an actual resurrection. No disciple could be so fanatical as to affirm that one had been raised from the dead, so long as the body could be seen under the power of death in Joseph's sepulcher close to the city. But some of them might steal the body before the third day came, and, showing an empty tomb, might affirm that their Lord had fulfilled his word and had risen. It would be easy, could they but obtain the consent of the procurator, to guard the place of burial until the third day was past, and thus to give absolutely indisputable evidence that he who died on the cross was still dead. Accordingly they went to Pilate, and told him of their apprehensions, and hinted to him that the rumor of a resurrection might lead to claims, and to disturbance in maintaining them, which would be more serious than those on which so severe a sentence had just been decreed and executed. Pilate was in no mood to argue with them or to deny them anything that they should ask. He told them that they had a guard—evidently the detachment of Roman soldiers detailed to maintain order about the temple—and they might use them, if they wished, to watch the sepulcher. They went accordingly, put a seal upon the stone that closed the door of the tomb, so that any disturbance of it could be known, and stationed the soldiers, accustomed to the rigorous discipline of the Roman army, to watch in turn through the day and the night. They need not be long on duty; it would prove nothing that the tomb should be found empty after the third day, if it were kept undisturbed until that day was over. Very soon he who had called himself Christ would be proved to be a deceiver, and his disciples would be shown to have followed vain hopes. An end would be put to the delusions which had had so much power and which threatened to do still more harm: Jesus of Nazareth was dead, and it would be in vain for any to assert that he was alive.

The sun went down at the end of the great sabbath, leaving the followers of Christ with little faith in him, and his enemies with increased hope that he had at last been overcome. Yet on the one hand stood in reality the great purposes of God and the prophetic word of his Incarnate Son, while on the other hand there were but the feeble efforts of man to baffle God's designs and to prevent the accomplishment of his word. The crucified Lord was but waiting that he might end his brief sojourn in the world of the dead, and then might triumph over death forever.

CHAPTER III.

THE LORD AMONG THE DEAD.

BUT, to bring before our minds all the events of the great sabbath, we must think not only of the new tomb in the garden near to the gates of Jerusalem, where the body of the Lord lay composed to rest, but also of the world of spirits—the state of the departed, into which the soul of the Lord, separated from his body, had passed from earth. For as he really died, and passed through all the experiences that belong to the lot of mortal men, his human soul came at death into that state which, for want of better phrase, we speak of as the place of departed spirits. Upon the cross, he promised the penitent robber that he should be with him that very day—that is, before the sun should set—in Paradise. The word had a sufficiently distinct meaning for every Jew of our Lord's time. It meant, in the Eastern sense of the word, a garden; as we use words, rather a park or large inclosed place of beauty and delight; and it recalled the garden, or paradise, of Eden, in which the first parents of mankind once dwelt, where grew all trees pleasant to the sight and good for food; where all animals roamed about finding natural enjoyment, and where man, having the gift of God's presence and God's grace, was put, to dress and to keep the place, and to find in it the opportunity of exercising and increasing all his wonderful powers. A place, or state, then, of natural happiness and of special divine favor and blessing was brought to the mind by the word paradise; such as man, after the fall, could not expect to find on earth, but into which, by God's mercy, he might enter at death. As the Lord used the word, he testified that the Jewish idea which it represented was at least not altogether erroneous. He promised the man who, crucified with him, had asked that he might be remembered when the Lord should come into his kingdom, that he should not need to wait long; that before a few hours should pass, he would meet him in a place of blessed rest. And we may perhaps believe that the first one to die after our Savior's own death—or at least the first one to die in faith—was the penitent to whom this gracious word had been spoken, and that he came into the world of spirits as the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

But it cannot be that the entrance into the world of spirits of him who had by death overcome death, and who was soon to proclaim his victory and to restore life to the world by rising from the dead, should fail to produce wondrous results in that world. There were multitudes there who had died in faith that he would come and would right the wrongs of the world; some in a strong faith and mighty assurance, others with but a feeble hope; some strengthened by a repeated and ever-brightening revelation, and others only groping for the light in a darkness that seemed to be growing more and more hopeless. It cannot but be that these knew that the Redeemer had been on earth, had made atonement by death, and had come for a time into their world; it cannot but be that he made some proclamation of his victory, and, by the very fact of the assurance that he gave, made that world of waiting a brighter and happier place than it had been before.

The difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament views of the world of the dead, is not merely such as comes from different degrees of revelation of the truth; it rather bears testimony to different truths—to the fact that Christ's death and descent into "hell" (using the word in its ancient sense, as the Apostles' Creed uses it) made a real change in the condition of the souls of those who had died in some faith or hope in the Redeemer. Thus

much at least Saint Peter tells us,¹ even if we cannot explain the full meaning of his words, when he speaks of that which Christ did, when, being put to death in his flesh, he was quickened (or kept alive) in his spirit. In that spirit, he says—in our ordinary phraseology we should say, in his soul—“He went and preached unto the spirits in prison;” that is, he made proclamation to the souls that were in a place of custody. There is hardly room for doubt that this means that Christ declared to the souls of the dead, who were capable of receiving and welcoming so great a truth, that he had done that great work of which they had felt the need while living on earth, and to which they had not ceased to look forward after their earthly life had come to an end. There is certainly some reason why the apostle goes on to say that those of whom he specially spoke were the souls of men who had been disobedient while God’s patience was waiting in the days of Noah before the flood; it may be because those to whom he was writing had little hope for these antediluvians, and that he would assure them that even in their case God’s long-suffering had not waited in vain, and that not all whose earthly life was ended by the waters of the flood died impenitent and rebelling against God. But, at any rate, the words give us a glimpse of what the Lord did while he was in paradise, and help us to understand how the blessings of his redemption extended to men who had died before his coming.

Thus it comes to pass that the consideration of our Lord’s sojourn in the state of the departed, his death and his being in the world of the dead, is full of instruction and of comfort. It enables us to understand somewhat of that over which there hangs so heavy a shade of ignorance and fear, and it comforts us as to the condition of those who have gone before us through that veil. It enabled men like Saint Paul to believe and to teach that to depart and to be with Christ was far better; it put upon the lips of the early Christians the acknowledgment of their belief that those of their brethren who had died in faith were “in the land of the living, whence sorrow, grief, and lamentation were driven away, and where the light of God’s countenance did visit and shine perpetually;” it gave a new meaning to the words which told of the peace and blessedness of the righteous dead; it cheers the Christian who thinks of the beloved ones that have gone before him, and who looks forward, should the Lord’s return be delayed, to a rest in that holy place where once the Savior found a rest, and in the rest, it may be, an opportunity of new service to those whom he came to save.

“ Oh, sweet is the slumber wherewith the King
Hath caused the weary to rest!
For, sleeping, they hear the angels sing,
They lean on the Master’s breast.

“ And sweet is the chamber, silent and wide,
Where lingers the holy smile
Of a wayfaring Man, who turned aside
To rest long ago, for a while:

“ He had suffered a sorrow which none can tell,
He had purchased a gift unpriced;
When his work was over the moonlight fell
On the sleeping face of Christ:

“ The face of a Victor, dead and crowned,
With a smile divinely fair;
The saints and martyrs sleeping around
Were stirred as he entered there:

¹ I. Peter iii, 18-20.

“ His very Name is as ointment poured
On the moonlight pale to-night,
And the chamber is sweet to thy servants, Lord,
For the scent of thy raiment white.

“ The silent chamber faceth the east,
Faceth the dawn of the day,
And the shining feet of our great High Priest
Shall break through the shadows gray.

“ The golden dawn of the Day of God
Shall smite on the sealed eyes ;
The trumpet's sound shall thunder around,
The dreamers shall wake and rise.

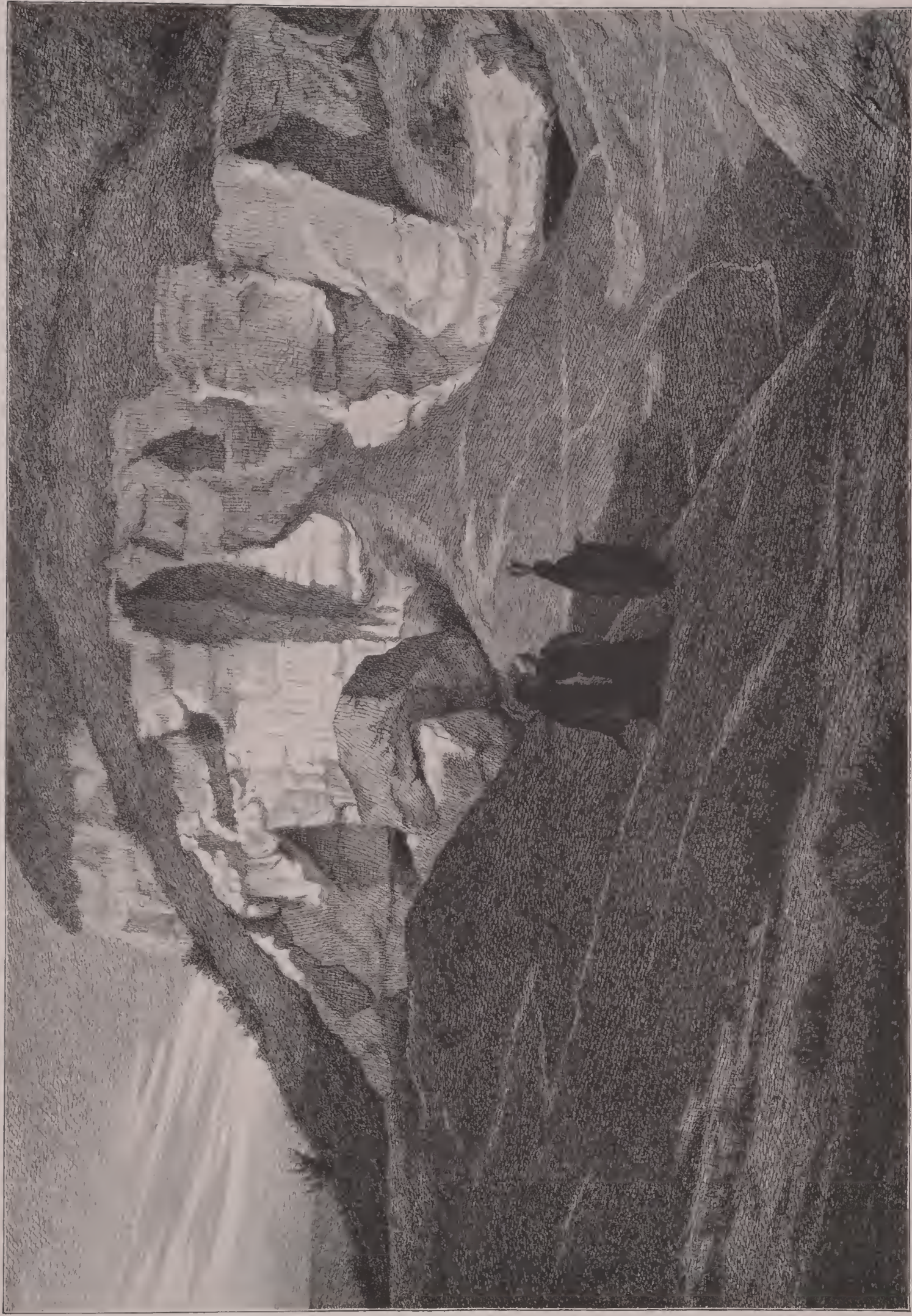
“ The night is over, the sleep is slept,
They are called from the shadowy place ;
The pilgrims stand in the glorious land,
And gaze on the Master's face.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE NARRATIVES OF THE RESURRECTION.

WHEN, following the narratives of the evangelists, we come to the record of the Resurrection and the events of the first Easter-day, we can hardly fail to notice the form in which that record is presented to us. In the first place, the story of the Resurrection, although it tells of so momentous an event—the greatest and most wonderful fact ever submitted to the evidence of men and confirmed by human testimony—is yet as simply told as is that of any fact in the Lord's life among men. From the words which tell of the death and the burial, we pass at once, and with hardly anything that tells of a transition, to those which tell of resurrection and the new life. Saint Matthew, to be sure, uses an expression of wonder as he mentions the great earthquake; but the other evangelists make not even the least break in the narrative. It is for all of them a quiet and simple record of an event which, before they wrote, they had learned to be as necessary a part of their Master's work as were his teaching, his works of mercy, his sufferings, and his death. At the time “they knew not that he must rise again from the dead;” but they soon were taught by himself, and this lesson was confirmed by the Holy Spirit whom he sent, “that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead;” and in so wondrous an event they saw a step in the path marked out for him, an act in his great work for men. And, therefore, as they recalled the events of the first Easter-day, they wrote them without excitement, with scarce an expression of unusual emotion, save as we can see that their hearts burned within them at the thought of all that was meant by that of which they wrote. It was wonderful, indeed; but it was that which they ought to have expected, and which they soon learned to understand aright; and the simplicity and naturalness of the narratives bear witness to their truth and to the apprehension which the writers had of its great and inexhaustible meaning.

And closely connected with this is another fact, which might appear strange to one who did not look carefully into the meaning of this part of the Gospel narrative. There is no argument



BIDA

THE WOMEN BRING SWEET SPICES TO THE SEPULCHER.

to prove the truth of Christ's Resurrection ; none of the sacred penmen does more than tell us of that which happened, either on the very day when Christ rose or between that and the day of the Ascension. The reason for this is doubtless that the need of such argument was, as they wrote, entirely out of their thoughts. No one needs to prove that he is alive, except by the very fact that he lives ; we do not require the men and women whom we meet from day to day to prove to us their existence or that they are alive in the flesh ; their being, their life, is a self-evident truth, as to which we do not think of asking a question. So it was with the risen Lord. He was alive ; he did the deeds, and spoke the words of a living man ; nay, even after he had gone from the sight of men, they knew that he still lived because he still had and exercised the power of one who had the fullness of life ; and, therefore, it was no more necessary for the evangelists to prove that Christ was living during the great forty days, than it was for them to prove that he was living when he dwelt in the quiet home at Nazareth or when he walked up and down in Galilee and Judea. There was once need of assurance when some saw him walking on the waters ; it was not, however, given by argument, but by his presence when he came near. So, too, an apostle doubted after the Resurrection, but only until he had seen the Lord ; and some doubted when he came to them at the mountain in Galilee, but only until he drew near and spoke to them. The disciples knew that their Lord was living after he rose from the dead, precisely as they knew that he was living before he submitted to death.

And in this way they knew that his was a real life in all its fullness. They knew that the risen Christ had the self-same body which they had seen fastened to the cross and which had been laid in the sepulcher. Whatever change had come over it, they could not mistake as to its identity ; it was not a ghostly appearance, a phantasm, possibly testifying to the existence of the soul but having nothing to do with a real body. They did not think of their Lord as they thought of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, of David, and Samuel, and the prophets — dead in the flesh though living in the spirit ; they were assured that he was in the full perfection of manhood, in all its parts and with all its proper powers. The penitent robber had died almost at the same time as the Lord, and he had been that very day with him in paradise : the robber was living in the disembodied state ; but the Lord was living in quite another sense, even as those lived who had not yet seen death, though with a wondrous life which had gained new powers by its passage through the dark world of the dead.

It need not, therefore, excite our wonder that we have no full and elaborate account of the events of the day on which Christ rose from the dead, or that we find it difficult to arrange that which has been recorded in such a way as to form one complete narrative. None of the evangelists intended to write a full history of this kind ; and here at least, however possible it may be that a later writer had before him what had been written at an earlier day, there is no appearance of any design of filling out what others had left imperfect. That which was prominent in the thoughts of each, either because it came under his own observation or was specially brought to his attention, or because it was in some particular way adapted to the purpose that guided his pen, was recorded by each : the mighty fact was stated in simple language as a great and most necessary part of the work of the Savior of the world, some at least of his manifestations of himself as the risen Lord were mentioned, and a few of the events and the sayings of the great forty days were recorded for the instruction of the ages that were to come.

And there are other reasons why the disconnected and apparently discrepant narratives of the evangelists, by the very fact that they are not methodical and complete, carry with them strong evidence of their truth far beyond any that could have come from a more formal and exhaustive history. The day of the Resurrection was to the disciples a day of anxiety and confusion. In spite of all that the Lord had said to warn them of his death and to assure them that he would rise on the third day, nearly if not quite all were utterly unprepared to enter the

shadow of the cross or to look upon the glory of the opened sepulcher. Women went to the grave on the Sunday morning, but it was that they might carry spices in which to wrap more carefully the sacred body that had been hastily laid in the tomb before the sun had set on the Friday. Apostles hastened to the place of burial, but it was with puzzled thoughts and hearts full of anxiety. Reports were spread as to a vision of angels who had declared that the Lord was alive; then one or two could tell others that they had certainly seen him who had been crucified; some were ready before nightfall to affirm, "The Lord is risen indeed," while they refused to accept the testimony of others to the self-same fact. While some were hastening out of the city by the gate that was nearest to their home or their lodging, others who had been to the tomb and found it empty were hastening back to enter by another gate. At times there seemed strong reason for believing, at times there appeared to be grounds for hope, and at times both faith and hope were dashed to the ground. It was, indeed, a day of strange excitement and confusion; few probably would have dared trust themselves that night to tell what they had heard and seen; it was enough that Mary of Magdala, and Saint Peter, and perhaps others could tell how they had seen and spoken with their Master, and that he had come to the place where ten of the apostles were gathered together and had given them a lofty commission.

What has been preserved for us bears the strongest evidence that it belongs to a truthful record of that which was said and done on such a day. We catch glimpses of the hurry and the anxiety, the hope and the growing faith, that marked the day; we see some dazed, and some startled, and some encouraged, by the tidings that reached them; and, above all, we see the calm dignity, the immortal vigor, the inspiring presence of him, the Living One, who had been dead and now was alive forevermore; and we hear the first echoes of blessing and peace as spoken by the lips of the Conqueror, who had gained the victory in his great conflict with death and had shed light on life and incorruption. Surely, when the blessed Spirit guided the minds of those who told of the Resurrection, it was that they might recall and put in writing a lifelike picture of that greatest of days—showing the reality of human souls, anxious, doubting, learning to believe, not the unreality of a fiction which can explain everything because it assumes or molds facts to suit a theory or a fancy.

Bearing these things in mind, and remembering that it is possible to ask many questions as to details which will not admit of a satisfactory answer, let us try to follow out, as best we can, the events recorded for us on the sacred page.



PALSIED MAN CURED.

CHAPTER V.

THE RESURRECTION MORN.

THE sabbath had ended at sunset on the day that we call Saturday. There had been opportunity then for the faithful women to buy such spices and ointments as they thought were needed; but they must wait till dawn before they could go out of the city and visit the place of entombment. Thus the women passed an anxious night, probably not knowing that the stone that closed the entrance to the tomb had been sealed at Pilate's order and that a guard of soldiers had been stationed there, for fear, forsooth, that the body wrapped with the hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes should be stolen and secreted, and that a false story of a resurrection from the dead should be spread abroad. At Saint John's home in the city was the Virgin Mother, whom that disciple, taking her Son's place, had led away from the cross; and one is more than half disposed to believe that in that house, as the mother and the beloved disciple talked together, there was a recalling of the Lord's promise and a faith that he, the true and faithful, would perform his word and rise from the dead. And from the fact that Saint Peter was found the next morning with Saint John, it seems almost certain that the apostle who had denied the Lord and had been recalled by the Lord's loving look had gone to the other apostle whose faithfulness had not failed, or perhaps had been sought by him, and that in that home and from those lips he had found comfort and the inspiration of hope. And if we may trust a tradition, which tells us that James, the brother of the Lord, sometimes called the bishop of Jerusalem, who probably was not of the number of the twelve, had declared that he would neither eat nor drink until he had seen his brother risen from the dead, there was in at least one other place, and that possibly within the temple precincts—for there Saint James was wont to resort—some remembrance of the Lord's promise and faith in him.

Meanwhile those who had charge of this part of the ritual of the Passover-tide had gone out into the fields—and this they were allowed to do even on the sabbath—that they might reap the first sheaf of the barley harvest of the year, in order that on the morrow after the sabbath it might be waved, as the first fruits, in the temple. And very early in the morning, before the sacred services could begin, and before the women could reach the tomb, Jesus Christ had risen from the dead.

It seems to have been the opinion of the early Christian writers that, as the human soul of Christ returned to his human body and the vital union was restored in a wholly miraculous manner, so, also, he came forth from the grave in the perfection of his manhood after a manner as miraculous, and that the angel who rolled away the great stone showed but an empty tomb. It matters but little whether we accept this opinion, or believe that the angel was sent to roll away the stone in order that the Lord might come forth in the glory and vigor of his new life. Saint Matthew tells us that at the angel's coming there was a great earthquake, and that his presence and his act struck fear into the minds of the guards so that they became as dead men. At once they fled from their posts, and their place was taken by the angel, who sat in triumph on the stone which he had removed and had placed, as it would seem, within the opening of the outer cave. There was still the dimness of twilight when Mary of Magdala, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, with one or more other women, came, bearing in their hands the spices which they intended to use in finally preparing the Lord's body for its rest in the tomb. Perhaps, as has been suggested, they had not known that the guard had been set at the grave; perhaps, in their sorrow and their devotion, they had not thought of the difficulty of entering the



AXEL ENDER.

By special permission of the artist.

RESURRECTION MORNING.

tomb; but as they hurried along, they began to ask one another how, with their feeble strength, they could remove the stone; and then, as they lifted their eyes, they saw that it was no longer in its place. Still they pressed on, and ventured to look into the tomb; and lo, there were angels there; he of whom we have read before was accompanied by another; and in the appearance of men in shining garments they spoke to the frightened women. They told them that the crucified Lord was risen, reminding them of his prophetic words of promise; they bade them hasten to tell the tidings to the disciples, and to say that the Lord would meet them in Galilee. What wonder that, at the strange sight and the sound of such strange words, the women trembled and were amazed? What wonder that, as they ran back to the city, they did not dare to speak to anyone? What wonder if, as they tried, either on that day or afterwards, to recall what they had seen and heard, their memory was confused and they knew not exactly how to tell the marvelous story? Apparently, the women had started from different parts of the city, and had met by appointment that they might come out together in the early light; but now as they hastened back, they went by different ways, some to nearer and some to more remote parts, each to her own home or to a place in the neighborhood where she knew that one or more of the disciples were.

Mary Magdalen hastened to the house of Saint John, which cannot have been far away, perhaps just within the nearest gate of the city; and to him and to Saint Peter, then (as has been suggested) sojourning with him, she dared tell no more than that the sepulcher was empty; she could not believe the angelic word; her message was but of an empty tomb. The two apostles, excited by her words, started at once to run to the place of the burial; and Mary followed them as best she could. Saint John, as the younger of the two apostles, and perhaps as animated by the faithful love which had never left him, ran more quickly than Saint Peter, and came first to the tomb. He stooped down to look into the inner chamber where the body had been laid, and saw that the grave-clothes were there. Detained, we may think, partly by a sense of reverence and partly by the growing conviction that the Lord had indeed fulfilled his word, he went no farther. But Saint Peter soon followed, and, hastening past him, as one might expect of a man so impetuous and so earnest, he went into the sepulcher. He saw at a glance that there had been no violent disturbance of the body which had been wrapped in the spices and laid there so short a time before; the grave-clothes were lying there in order, and the napkin which had been put around the head was wrapped together and laid by itself. Some exclamation from him may have led Saint John to follow; he also went in, and as he tells us, "he saw and believed." This cannot mean merely that he was satisfied that the body was no longer there, and that Mary had brought a true report; it must be that the evangelist means to tell us that, as he stood there, he was convinced that all had been done as had been promised by him who had foretold his death and his resurrection, his humiliation and his victory; for himself he needed no further proof: "He saw and believed." The two then hastened back to the city. And if they spoke on the way, how wonderful must have been the conversation! When they arrived at the home where they had left the Virgin Mother, how wonderful the words in which they told her of that which they had seen! and how wonderful must have been the faith, the joy, with which she welcomed the tidings that they brought!

Meanwhile, Mary Magdalen had come back to the tomb; and it may readily be believed that she had not seen the two apostles as they started to return, and that they had failed to notice her. In loving sorrow and anxious despair she stood outside of the sepulcher, weeping and with bowed head looking in, as if in hope that what she feared might prove to be untrue, and that the Lord's body might be still resting where it had been laid. As she looked, she saw two angels sitting as if to guard so sacred a place. They asked her why she was weeping; and she answered, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." She knew it not, but the Lord himself was there standing at the entrance of the tomb.

Some act or gesture of reverence on the part of the angels, who saw him as he stood there, caused her to turn about; she also saw him, but she failed to recognize him, and thought that he was the keeper of the garden in which was the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. And when he asked the cause of her grief, she begged him, if it were he who had removed the body that had been laid there, to tell her where it was, that she might give it due honor of sepulture. "Jesus saith unto her, Mary! She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni!" It needed but the accent of the familiar voice of him who "callesth his own sheep by name" to assure her that it was indeed the living Master who stood there; and as he spoke her name in the familiar language, so in the same tongue she saluted him "My Master." There was no need of argument or of further words. Though she could not understand how he who had but lately died a death of utter exhaustion and had been wrapped in grave-clothes could be standing there in the full might of life and in the ordinary dress of men, she knew that it was he; and she welcomed him with the word of affectionate reverence which doubtless she had used often before. And then, when she would have shown her affection and her joy by some outward gesture, he bade her not to touch him, giving as a reason that he had not yet ascended to the Father, but to carry word to his disciples—whom he called his brethren—that he was about to ascend. Whatever else the words meant, they must have been intended to direct the minds of the disciples to the consideration of the meaning of the Lord's redemptive work, to the fact that he must return to the Father before that work could be accomplished, and that when he had ascended he would be really nearer to them than when they could touch him here on earth. It was the assurance, coming from his lips when he was but just risen, that he had risen for their sakes, that in his resurrection life they would be united with him, that his Father was also their Father, and his God also their God. The message was to teach them not to expect that his new life would be lived among men like that which had preceded his sufferings and death, that even those nearest to him were not to be with him as they had been during the three years of his ministry, that the new life was to be shown in a new way. Mary Magdalen went back to the city, and told some of the mourning disciples that the Lord was alive and that she had seen him; but the story was too wonderful for them, and they did not believe it.

CHAPTER VI.

OTHER MANIFESTATIONS ON EASTER DAY.

AS we go through the fourfold record of events that happened on this day, we must constantly remind ourselves, as has been said already, that from the nature of the case we cannot expect to frame a strictly continuous narrative of that which was said and done; and it may be that our attempts at what is called "harmonizing" will but lead to confusion. Still, we cannot doubt the accuracy of the records; and no violent suppositions are needed to enable us to read them together.¹ We are plainly told that Christ's first appearance was to Mary of Magdala, and also that he met the women who were returning from the sepulcher. This may readily have been if Mary had but a short way to run to Saint John's house, and if the others started by longer roads to more remote parts of the city. All that we have thus far mentioned might have taken place in a short time, perhaps in a quarter of an hour; and some of the women, going along in fright and sorrow with but little hope, would have been still on the way. Thus it was that the Lord met them, and saluted them. They recognized him and prostrated

¹ This writer does not hesitate to accept the latter part of the last chapter of Saint Mark as a portion of the Gospel narrative.

themselves before him, touching his feet in the attitude of adoration. He must have appeared to them in more awe-inspiring guise than to Mary, for he bade them not be afraid, but he sent by them a more simple message than he had given her to carry, charging them to tell his brethren not to look for him in Jerusalem, but to go to Galilee that they might see him there.

Before any of the women had come to the tomb, yet in all probability but a short time before, the guard of Roman soldiers had been frightened away by the earthquake and the sight of the angel who came to roll back the stone. They also hastened to the city, and knowing at whose instigation they had been assigned to their duty, they went to the chief priests to tell what had happened. Uneasy in their minds, partly fearing that the Lord's words—or the gloss which they had put upon them—might prove true, and partly thinking that some of his adherents might attempt an act of violence, they were ready to act at that early hour. They called the elders and held a consultation. It was hard for them to know exactly what to believe; probably they thought that it was safest for them to ask very few questions. It might be that the Prophet of Nazareth had indeed risen, as he had said; it might be that a false report to that effect would be spread abroad. It would be better, they thought, to keep very quiet. So they called the soldiers, gave them a considerable bribe, made them promise, if they were questioned, to confess to the shame of sleeping on duty and neglecting their guard, and agreed to arrange matters with Pilate if he should happen to hear of what was said. The whole thing was far from creditable to Roman governor, or Roman soldiers, or Jewish priests and elders, and they knew it; but they determined to adopt a policy of silence and of falsehood and to face it out. When Saint Matthew wrote, this saying was commonly reported among the Jews. But the fact that they made no investigation, and that those of the Jews who afterward denied the Resurrection were Sadducees, indicates the state of mind in which the responsible leaders of the Jews found themselves in this matter from the very first.

When Saint Paul, writing to the Corinthians at a time before the greater part of those who had seen the risen Lord had fallen asleep in death, was enumerating some of his manifestations, he mentioned "that he was seen of Cephas," before his appearance to the whole body of the apostles. We can hardly err if we place this also early on the morning of Easter-day. Saint Mark, who wrote, as we have strong reason to believe, at the suggestion, if not under the eye, of Saint Peter, mentions that in the words of the angels to the women who came first to the sepulcher there was a message for the apostle who had denied his Lord: "Go quickly, tell his disciples and Peter." Saint Peter—Cephas is but the common Aramaic equivalent for the Greek form of his name—had last seen the Lord when, after the third and most shameful denial, he had turned and looked upon him. That look had brought the apostle back to himself; he had gone out into the darkness of the night, and had wept bitterly. We have no record that he had ventured to go to the cross; we only know that on the Resurrection morning he was with Saint John, and ran with him to find the tomb empty. How deep, how nearly despondent, was his repentance, we may not know; how Saint John and the mother of Jesus had talked to him of forgiving love we can but imagine; but whose heart is not moved with a sense of the reality of the apostle's repentance and the fullness of the Lord's forgiving grace when he reads of the special message and the special manifestation? We hardly dare imagine what was done and said when the risen Christ was seen of Cephas. At least we know that he was assured of forgiveness and restored to his discipleship, as after a few days, by the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he was formally reinstated in his place as an apostle. And the comfort and encouragement that come to us all from the few words, "He was seen of Cephas," can be felt, indeed, but we may not undertake to tell all that they mean.



JESUS APPEARS TO THE WOMEN.

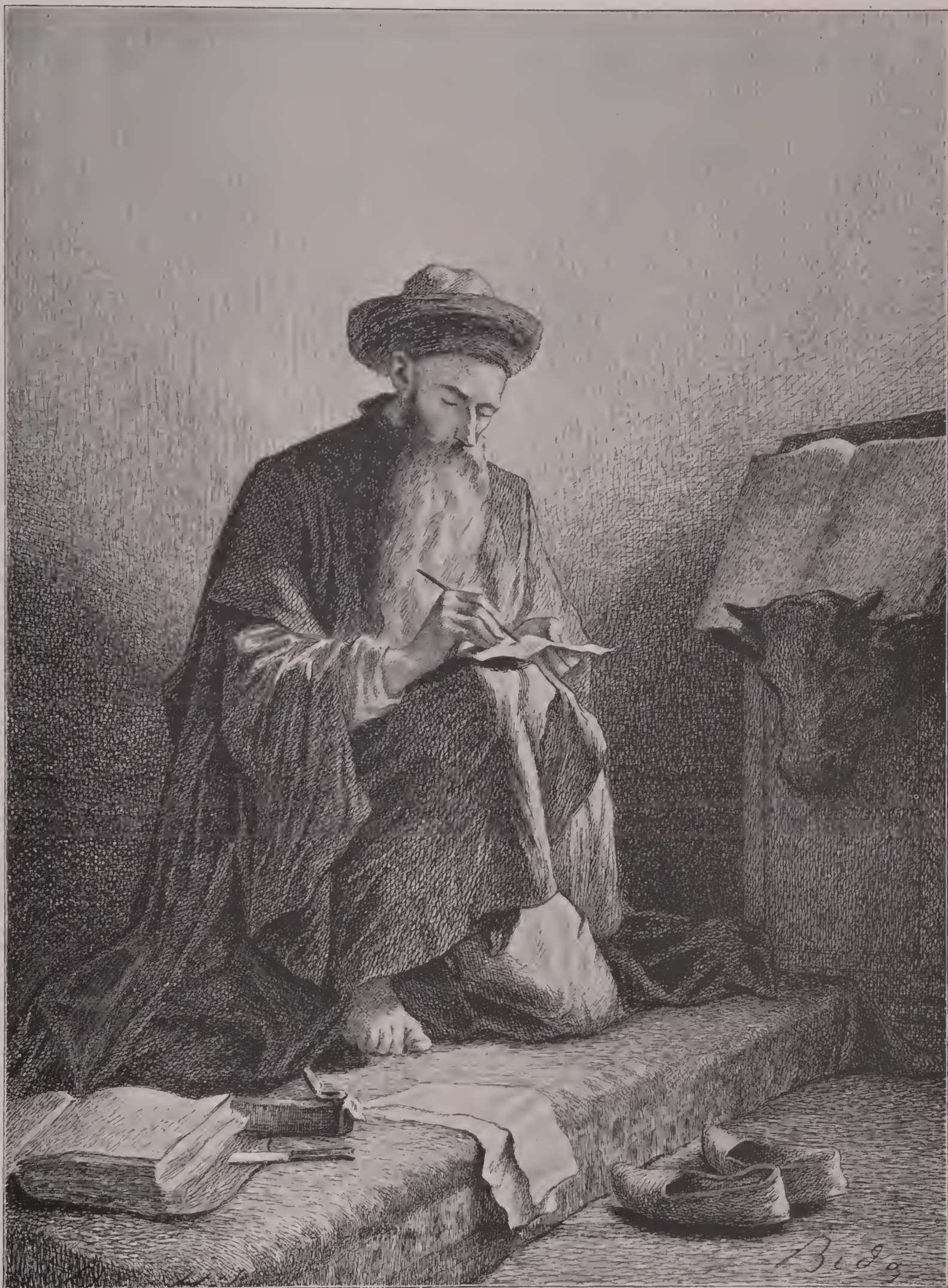
CHAPTER VII.

THE EVENING OF EASTER DAY.

WE are told no more of what happened on that Easter day until it began to draw toward evening. Jerusalem and all its suburbs were still filled with throngs who were keeping the Passover week ; the temple courts were crowded with those who were engaged in acts of worship ; the pious Jew was rejoicing before Jehovah with the joy that came from memory of the deliverance in days of old, from the hopes that the promises would be fulfilled, from the blessing of the harvest which was thus early begun. The rulers of the people were in consternation at the news which had reached them ; the rabble probably had but little thought for that which had occurred two days ago, and had not heard any rumors as to a great event which had taken place on this third day. A few faithful ones had seen the risen Christ ; a few others, because of their word, had come to believe that he was risen ; most of the professed disciples who were in or near Jerusalem had heard their testimony and were astonished at it, but they could not bring themselves to believe it. It was the first Christian Sunday, but to most of Christ's disciples it was not a day of peace or of rest ; rather was it a day of anxiety and trouble, of sad questionings of heart, and of doubts that would not be dispelled.

This we might have inferred, indeed, from the silence of the evangelists. But it is made plainer to us from the record of the appearance of our Lord to two disciples on their way to the village of Emmaus. The name of one, we are told, was Cleopas ; the other may have been Saint Luke himself, who records the circumstances with much detail. They had started for a long walk of some seven or eight miles, very likely that they might think and talk in quiet of what they knew had happened and what had been reported to them. They had known Christ, and had trusted that he was to be the Redeemer of Israel ; they had at least learned of his death ; they had heard some of the women telling how, when they went early to the sepulcher, they had seen, or had thought they saw, angels who told them that he was alive. As they walked along, their conversation became earnest argument ; they could not understand, they did not agree. A stranger—for such they thought him—came near and began to walk with them. He asked them what it was as to which they were arguing, their faces showing such gloom. They told him what they knew and had heard, and disclosed to him somewhat of the perplexity that was in their minds ; and then he began to speak. He told them that, if they had but understood the Scriptures aright, they would see that all that had happened—the suffering and the consequent glory—had been foretold of the coming Redeemer ; and explained to them in orderly manner the teaching of all the sacred writings in regard to the Christ. When they came to their resting place at Emmaus, at their request, he entered and reclined with them for the evening meal. Then, acting as the host and the head of the family, he took into his hands the bread that had been provided, blessed it and brake it, and gave it to them. They recognized him then ; they knew why it was that their hearts had burned within them while he expounded the Scriptures ; their Lord was indeed alive, and had been teaching them out of the Scriptures about himself. Then he disappeared ; but they had no doubt as to his identity and the reality of his bodily appearance.

At once they started back for Jerusalem ; they went to the place of meeting, unknown to their enemies among the Jews, where they expected to find the apostles with others—very probably the upper room from which three nights before, after the breaking of bread, the Lord had gone forth to his agony ; “they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of the bread.” Saint Luke tells us that, when they came in,



ST. LUKE.

they were welcomed with the words, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon;" Saint Mark, that when they told of their own experience, they were not believed; nor is this strange; for men are apt to speak positively of that which they themselves can tell, and to doubt the self-same thing when it is told by another. Their minds were in the balance between belief and doubt, between hope and fear; the new report but puzzled them the more. And lo, at that moment the Lord stood among them, and gave them the wonted salutation of peace. For a moment they were in terror, thinking that some ghostly visitor had come to alarm them; but the Lord spoke words of comfort, showed them his pierced hands and feet, and ate of the food which they gave him at his request. And—it is a touch of nature and a touch of grace as well, which we owe to Saint John's pen—"then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

The Lord repeated his salutation of peace; and he then gave to his disciples the apostolic commission, sending them forth, even as the Father had sent him. And then, breathing on them, as a symbol of the Divine Spirit of whom he spoke, he bade them receive the Holy Spirit, and gave them an authority which, whatever else it implied, meant at least that the welfare of human souls would be dependent upon that which they should do in his name. Though Saint Luke tells us that others were present, there seems little doubt that these words were spoken especially to the apostles, and yet to the apostles as the representatives of the Church, to whom were given powers for the benefit of the Church. And the terms used are such as apply to an official college of men, and not to individuals. The traitor had gone "to his own place;" Saint Thomas was not with the others when at this time the Lord came; yet Saint Paul, apparently referring to this occasion, says that "He was seen of the twelve," and Saint Luke says that "the eleven" were gathered together. The Lord was breathing the breath of life into his Church, the "company of faithful people," made up at the first of those whom his words and his works had gathered about him, to be fully vivified at the day of Pentecost, and to be his witness until he should return.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GREAT FORTY DAYS.

IT must be left to imagination—or, it were better said, to devout meditation—to form some idea of the week that followed, and, indeed, of nearly the whole of the time that intervened before the Ascension. For though Saint Luke, at the opening of the Acts of the Apostles, tells us that Christ "was seen" by the disciples "forty days," yet the form of the expression implies no more than that he appeared to them at intervals during that time; and the number of his recorded appearances or manifestations is small. We know of none after the day of the Resurrection until the following Sunday. Saint Thomas had not seen the Lord when he showed himself to the others and gave to the apostolic college its commission. And he had gone so far as to say that only the most positive evidence of touch would convince him that the body that had hung on the cross had been made alive, and that Christ was truly raised from death. He was with the others on the second Sunday, and the doors were shut as they had been before. Again the Lord stood among his disciples, and gave them the salutation of peace. And then he offered to the doubting apostle the evidence which he had declared that he would require. But Saint Thomas did not need it; the sight of his Master and the sound of his voice convinced him; and he addressed him in words of a higher faith than any other, so far as we know, had as yet used: "My Lord and my God!" But Christ, in accepting the profession of his belief, declared that a special blessing was theirs who believed though they had not seen.



ST. MARK.

It would seem that it must have been after this, though how much later we cannot tell, that the risen Lord met his disciples in Galilee. The message sent by him from the open tomb had not been such as to lead them to expect that many would see him in or near Jerusalem. The angels bade the women tell the disciples that he was going to Galilee, and that they should see him there, and his own lips soon repeated the command and the promise. We can see that this was, in a way, necessary. No large body of the followers of Christ could have assembled under the eyes of the rulers of the Jewish people, without rousing a tumult and creating a scene of confusion quite unsuited to the manifestation of the Christ who was now about to take to himself his spiritual kingdom, and quite subversive of any evidential value that might attach to such a manifestation. And we can see, besides, that the meeting in Galilee was in accordance with the Lord's plan and progress in the work of his ministry. Jerusalem, though it was the Holy City and ought to have been the seat of his kingdom, was for the most part but a place where he met persistent enmity and determined opposition. He visited the city, to be sure, that he might obey the law and that he might present himself to his people; but his earthly home, "his own city," was a despised town on the shore of the Galilean lake. And those whom he gathered about him were for the most part the simple folk of Galilee, who listened to his teachings and accepted them, who saw his marvelous works and knew their meaning, who professed themselves his disciples and held allegiance to him in spite of the derision and the persecution of the scribes and Pharisees that were of Jerusalem. In the quiet country of northern Palestine, his earthly home as it was that of so many of his followers, on a mountain apart which he had appointed his disciples, the Lord met them. Thither had come the eleven, there also assembled more than five hundred others; for we can hardly think that the manifestation to so large a body, of which Saint Paul speaks, could have taken place at any different place or time; and they all saw him.

Then, says Saint Matthew, "they worshiped him; but some doubted." The simplicity and honesty of the narrative again witnesses to its truth. It could not have been otherwise. Very probably none of that large company, except the eleven, had until then seen the Lord since his resurrection; but some of them had believed on the word of the apostles, reaching them directly or indirectly; others, doubtless, were so far disposed to believe that they needed but to look upon their Master or to hear the wonted accents of his voice; while some must have needed what seemed stronger evidence, or perhaps required some little time that their minds might apprehend and accept so great a truth. If an apostle was for a time doubtful in his Lord's resurrection, it is not at all strange that some of the humbler disciples, who may have known him but for a short time, who had not followed him as he went to and fro in the land, who had very inadequate ideas of his person, his work, and his claims, should have hesitated to believe that he who stood before them was indeed the Master of whom they had heard that he had suffered the death on the cross. But that as a consequence of this great manifestation they all did believe, there can be no doubt; though we may not know all that Christ said and did to assure them that it was indeed himself whom they saw and heard, in what different ways he recalled and confirmed and guided their faith, or in what wondrous manner he prepared them for that which was to come.

The 500 who were gathered on the mountain in Galilee, which one would fain think was the Mount of the Beatitudes (unless, indeed, it was that on which three apostles had once seen him transfigured), must have been nearly, if not quite, the whole body of those who had really accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of God. They were to form the nucleus of the Christian Church, when the spirit of life should come to breath upon them, that the face of the moral creation might be renewed; and as by divers ways they had come to accept Christ the Teacher, so by divers ways they came to accept Christ the risen Lord. But that he drew them to this faith before he assured them of his authority and based upon it his great charge to the



BIDA.

THE SCRIBES AND THE PHARISEES.

Church we cannot doubt; nor could Saint Paul have written to the Corinthians as he did, if he had not considered all of them to be competent witnesses of the Resurrection. It was nearly twenty-five years later than this when Saint Paul wrote from Ephesus his first epistle to the Church at Corinth; and he affirmed that, though some of the more than five hundred brethren to whom the Lord appeared had fallen asleep, yet the greater part still remained in life. Very probably few of the converts at Ephesus, and fewer yet of those of Corinth, could have met with any of that favored company; but it was something for them to be assured that there were still living some three hundred persons to whom the risen Lord had manifested himself, and that they stood so very near this revelation.

This manifestation of Christ must have been most wonderful. It was no ordinary interview — that of the Lord awaiting his ascension, with his Church awaiting the gift of the Holy Ghost that was to follow upon it. He must ascend, indeed, from the Mount of Olives hard by the Holy City and the place where he had been crucified; but as Peter, and James, and John had once seen before his death a glimpse of that glory to which he was to come through death, so the 500 may have been granted before his ascension some glimpse of the glory upon which he was to enter when he should sit at the right hand of the Father. And as the former vision helped to sustain the three apostles in the days of trial through which they had to pass so who can tell how much of the bravery, and courage, and confidence that marked the early years of the Church's history was due to the fact that there were so many disciples who had seen the risen Lord and heard his words? And what words, in fact, they were! As he spoke them, his face must have been bright with heavenly radiance, and his person must have borne witness to their truth. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." He spoke as the Son of Man, who had passed through the experiences of life and death, and as Son of Man had been made perfect by them. He spoke as he could not have spoken during the long years of quiet preparation which preceded his public ministry, nor while he was healing the sick and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, nor when he offered himself in sacrifice to the Father, nor yet when he surrendered his soul into the Father's hands. Not then had all power been given to him, not then had it been possible for him to receive all power. Though he was the Son of God, yet his humanity must be prepared for the exaltation to which it was destined; and the only path for the Son of Man, who came "in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin," to attain glory and honor was the path of a sinless life, a death of sacrifice, and a resurrection to new life. That path he had trodden in faithful humility; and through the grave and gate of death he had come to his joyful resurrection. It was not the ordinary life of earth in virtue of which he was living then; it was that new life, which has new capacities and faculties because it has passed through death. Certainly, he was marching to victory even when he was nailed to the cross, but the victory was not fully gained, the triumph was not awaited, till he had risen. And now he had risen, the Victor; and because he was Victor, he was able to receive and to exercise the fullness of authority. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." There can be no limit to the rightful authority of the perfect Man who had lived and died and was living, never again to die. Neither time nor space can set a limit to his sway; his kingdom shall have no end and no bounds. And this the Lord declared of himself, as claiming a prerogative and as assuring the faith of his disciples; now possessed of no weakness, now hedged about with no infirmity, he can claim lordship over all the creation of God, in things heavenly and things earthly.

Yet it was not solely or chiefly by way of assertion that the Lord made proclamation of the authority that had been given him when he rose and because he rose from the dead. "Go ye, therefore," he continued, "and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Because of his unlimited authority, he could give to his disciples a great and practically unlimited commission.

He might not himself at once exercise his authority; nay rather, because it was moral in its character and its highest exercise was over the souls of men, a preparation must be made for it; and because it was universal, the preparation must extend beyond the limits of the holy land, and the Jewish people, and must reach the ends of the earth. The believers who had seen the Lord and could witness to the Resurrection must go forth from the narrow confines of Palestine, and from the narrow restrictions of the ancient law. They must bring all the nations to discipleship, baptizing them and teaching them, admitting them to privilege and instructing them in both privilege and duty. They must use and assert their Lord's authority, and must lead all mankind to accept it and to be guided by it. They must exercise, on the Lord's behalf, a pastoral and a prophetic work, and must, in exercising it, carry a great responsibility.

And as Christ Jesus, the risen Savior, spoke these words, he gave utterance to a Name of God, the truth contained in which had indeed been shadowed forth before, but which had not as yet been spoken to men, the Name of God which specially marks the revelation of these Christian ages, the Name of God to which ascends the constant hymn of praise—the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He who had been known to the early patriarchs as God Almighty, he who had revealed himself to his chosen people as Jehovah, the self-existent and covenant-keeping God, now made himself known by that threefold Name which tells, indeed, of wondrous mysteries, but which also tells man of the possibility of close approach to God and living communion with him. And thus the Lord Jesus Christ, himself the Son of God, showed the greatness of the duty that he laid upon his Church, and also gave it the strongest possible incentive to faithfulness. He taught his disciples a truth which none before had apprehended save in enigma, and he bade them make that the center of their life and of their teaching. Nor did he stop here; he gave them the word of personal encouragement, and assured them of his continued presence. They had known that he was to ascend to the Father; they knew now what they were to do for him and for the world while he was gone; they needed to be told that they would not be left alone and that their labor would not be in vain. And the Lord assured them of all that their souls needed and more than they could have felt that they needed: "Lo, I am with you all the days, unto the completion of the age"—"the end of the world," as we translate it. They did not know, doubtless they could not be told, how long the age would last, how long it would be before their Master should return; it was enough for them to be assured that in no day of their service and their waiting could he forsake them: "Lo, I am with you all the days." With such a commission, and with such an encouragement, were the believers to whom the Lord had manifested himself prepared for their great work.

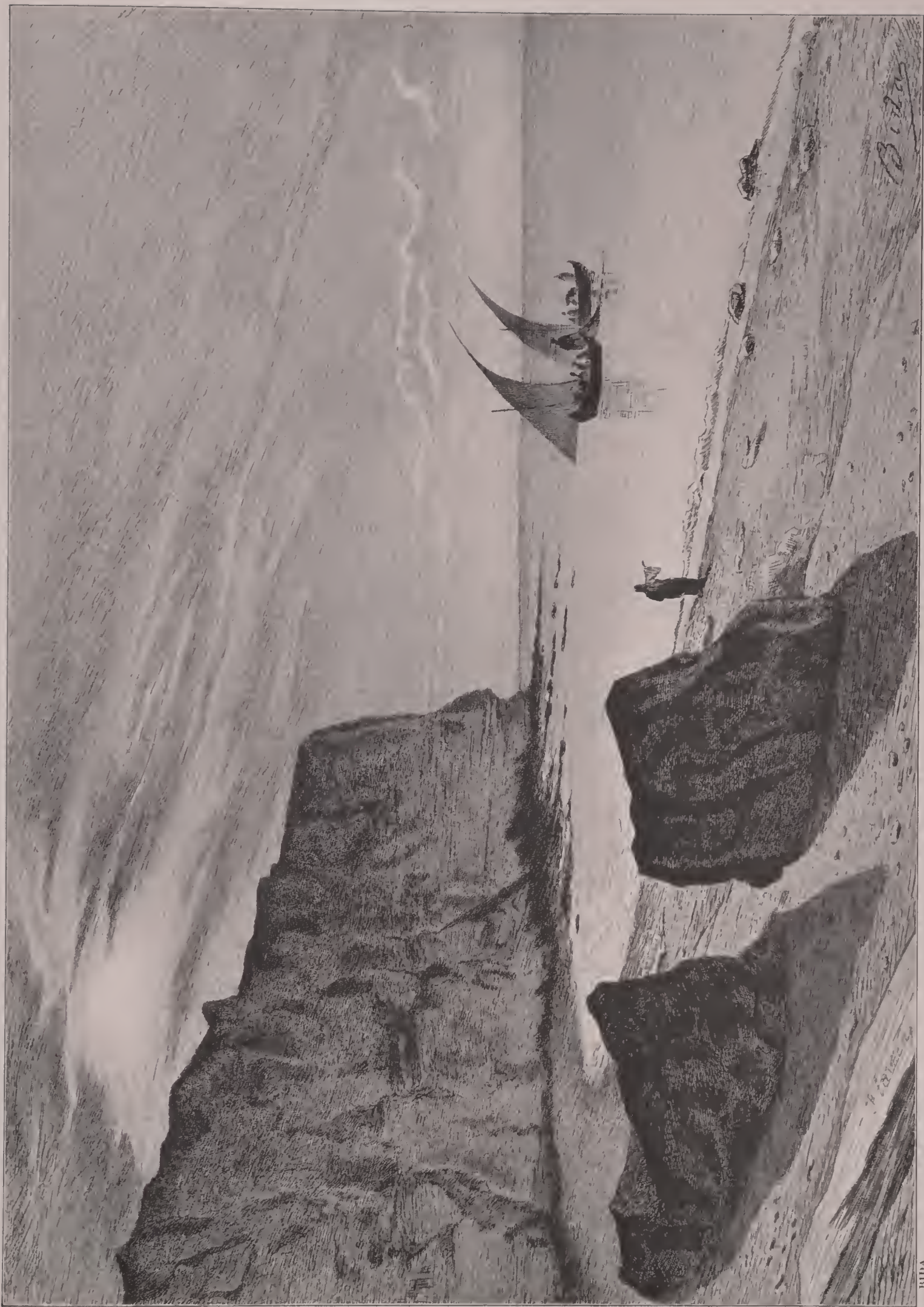
CHAPTER IX.

CHRIST'S MANIFESTATIONS TO HIS APOSTLES.

SAINT PAUL tells us that, after the appearance to the 500, our Lord appeared to James and then to all the apostles. This must have been, as far as we can see, after he had returned to Jerusalem. The James mentioned by name was doubtless the Lord's brother, the author of an epistle addressed to the twelve tribes in the dispersion, and prominent in Jerusalem, whom we find even in the time of the Acts of the Apostles presiding over the "mother and mistress of all the Churches." It has been thought that he was one of the apostles, known as James the Less, or James the son of Alphaeus; but it seems to the writer that he was not of the number of the twelve. An ancient tradition has already been noted, which affirms that he had believed that the Christ, who was accounted his brother according to the flesh, would certainly rise from death. Yet it can hardly be as a special reward or confirmation of faith that the Lord at this time granted a manifestation to Saint James alone; rather it must have been because he was to be placed in a special dignity and to have a special responsibility laid upon him. He who always, in some way or other, prepares his servants for the duties that he expects of them, did not fail to do so in this most important case. As at a later time the great Apostle to the Gentiles was sent to Arabia that he might quietly learn what he needed to know and be fitted for his great responsibility,¹ so he who was to be for a time at the head of the Church at Jerusalem was told in private of that which it specially behooved him to know. And the holiness and the wisdom of Saint James, to which witness is borne by ancient writers, tell of the faithfulness with which he heard and obeyed.

And as this is best understood of an official manifestation (if the words may be thus employed), so we may well put a like interpretation upon the clause which follows: "Then of all the apostles." For, unless we are to find at this early time an extension of the apostolate beyond the number of those whom the Lord first chose, the word must mean the same persons as those whom Saint Paul had just called "the twelve." And the difference in phraseology would seem to point to a difference in the purpose for which the manifestation to them was made. It seems most natural that those on whom so great a responsibility was soon to fall, who were to be the leaders of the Church while it was completing its organization and entering upon its great work, should have some special commands from their Master, and some special evidence on which to rest their faith. To "the apostles whom he had chosen," says Saint Luke at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, Christ "showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, being seen of them forty days"—that is to say, as the original shows, at intervals during forty days—"and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." This more than suggests that there were other times when the Lord met his disciples for purposes of instruction, besides those which are mentioned in the Gospels. But in the words that follow we are told of one time in particular when he gave to the apostles a special command and opened before them a special vision of duty. He first charged them to wait in Jerusalem after he should ascend, until they should receive the promise of the Father and be baptized with the Holy Ghost. They came together, Saint Luke tells us—and apparently it was at this same time—and asked him if he was then to restore the kingdom to Israel. He bade them not inquire concerning times and seasons, assured them that they should receive power when the Holy Ghost should come, and declared that they should be witnesses to him first in the city

¹ Galatians i, 17.



THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

BIDA.

and the land of their own people and then to the nations beyond—"in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." If this was not the time which Saint Paul had in his mind when he wrote to the Corinthians, it was a time corresponding to it. The apostles were indeed to be taught by the Holy Spirit, who should put them in remembrance of what their Master had said unto them; but they were first to be told from the lips of the Lord himself of "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Of the details of this instruction we are not told; but as we see how before the day of Pentecost they filled up the vacancy in the apostolic college, we can hardly doubt that they had been commanded so to do (Saint Peter said that "one must be ordained to be a witness with" the eleven); and in successive acts which they performed as they bore witness to Christ, first among the Jews, then to Samaritans, and soon to the Gentiles in many lands, we may well believe that we see the fulfillment of that which the risen Lord had enjoined upon them. Thus we may gain an imperfect idea of the wondrous converse which he held with his apostles while he tarried on earth before he ascended into the heavens; and thus we may see how, in every way, full preparation was made for the establishment and the propagation of his Church.

CHAPTER X.

THE RISEN LORD AT THE SEA OF GALILEE.

IT remains to notice the events which we find recorded in the last chapter of Saint John's Gospel. That chapter is of the nature of an appendix, and appears to have been added by the evangelist after he had concluded the account which he had at first intended to make. It combines simple narrative with the record of miracle and prophecy, and is full of varied instruction. We cannot tell just where it belongs in the great forty days; but we probably shall not err if we place it near the time when the Lord met the great body of his disciples on the mountain in Galilee. By the shore of the lake where he had so often walked in the days of his ministry, there were together seven of his disciples. Five, we know, were apostles: Peter, and Thomas, and Nathanael, and James, and John; the names of the other two are not told. The place, the hour, the actions of the seven remind us of the time when the Lord had bidden Simon, and Andrew, and James, and John to follow him and to be fishers of men; but the points of difference are full of significance. The Lord is not now with the disciples in the ship, but standing in the dim light of morning on the shore. He tells them on which side of the ship to cast the net; it is drawn in full of great fishes, the number of which is carefully noted; and, in marked contrast to that former time, the net is not broken, and the great Apostle Peter does not pull it into the ship, but draws it to land. If in the former miracle there was a parable of the apostolic work in the imperfection of the days of waiting for Christ to come again, there was in the latter a parable of the perfection of that work in the day of his return. There was a fire of coals on the shore, and the Lord called the seven to eat of bread and fish which he had himself provided against their coming to land, as before, near the same place, he had fed the multitude with bread and fish multiplied under his hand from the little store that was furnished by a lad in the company.

Then came the formal reconciliation of the apostle who had denied the Lord, and his restoration to the apostolate. By the fire of coals, which recalls the fire of coals near which Saint Peter had stood in the court of the high priest's palace, the Lord thrice questioned him as to his love for him. Twice in asking the question, he used the word that implies the love of

respect and reverence; and twice the apostle in answering substituted the word that tells of affection. We may, perhaps, express the words thus: "Lovest thou me?" "Thou knowest that I love thee dearly." The third time, the Lord took up the apostle's own word, and it was this change which grieved, or we might almost say, broke down, Saint Peter: "Lovest thou me dearly?" "Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee dearly." The apostle ventured to claim, the Lord vouchsafed to ask for, only the natural and simple love of affection; the deeper, more earnest, less demonstrative emotion was left to grow in the soul and show itself in the life. And, after each reply, the Lord gave to his penitent apostle an apostolic charge and commission. He was no longer to be a fisher of men, but a shepherd. "Feed my lambs;" "Tend my sheep;" "Feed my sheep." The words tell of all the parts of the work of the shepherd of souls: the provision of simple nutriment for the little ones, the watchful care of those who are more mature, and the providing for these latter the sustenance that they require; these are in the order of time, and in the order of difficulty as well, the successive steps in the work of those who care for souls. Spoken to Saint Peter, they were really spoken to all who should have a part in that most blessed work.

Then to the apostle thus restored and commissioned the Lord showed, in words of which only the general meaning was evident at the time, the way in which he should glorify God by a martyr's death; and, as three years before he had called Simon the fisherman to follow him, the Teacher of men, in the ways of human life, so now he called Peter the apostle to follow him, the Redeemer and King of men, to death that thus he might glorify God. The sense of forgiving love, so amply shown toward one who had basely denied the Master, filled Saint Peter's heart with wonder and with gratitude. Near him stood Saint John, who, as he wrote, thought of himself but as the disciple whom Jesus condescended to love. In the high priest's palace Saint John had also stood by, and, as the narrative plainly shows, had confessed himself a disciple of the Man whom slaves were then mocking and beating in the presence of the rulers of God's people. What, thought Saint Peter, could be left for the faithful one, if such forgiveness and service and reward were given to one who had proved unfaithful in the hour of temptation? And so he ventured to ask: "Lord, how about this man?" The answer was not meant to satisfy curiosity; but it told of blessedness greater even than that of toiling and dying for the Master, while yet it laid strong emphasis on duty: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." Leaving its interpretation to be determined by the event, the beloved disciple closed his record. But in the words which the Lord spoke we may see, as one has well said, a teaching as to two kinds of work for him, each with its own issue: "The one is the minister of action, whose service is consummated by the martyrdom of death; the other is the minister of thought and teaching, whose service is perfected in the martyrdom of life."

CHAPTER XI.

THE TRUTH OF THE RESURRECTION; ITS EVIDENCE AND MEANING.

THUS we have gone somewhat in detail over the history of the great forty days as it has been recorded by the evangelists. In a very true sense, the story thus told and studied is its own evidence. As was noted at the beginning, the sacred penmen know that they are writing of a most momentous event, while at the same time they write with great dignity and sobriety. They have to tell of days of confusion, and doubt, and unrest; yet, while they testify to all this, it is with full assurance of faith on their own part, and with no attempt at formal argument to induce faith on the part of others. There is all possible evidence of the truth of that which they record; nevertheless, the story is told in all simplicity and as if to remind those who already believe. The effect of the whole upon the mind is overwhelming. Assuming the fact that one who had been known to die and to be buried had actually risen from death and had been seen by his friends, could any uninspired man have written of it as the evangelists wrote, even if he had wished to do so? Would any uninspired man have thus written of it, even if he had been able to do so? There is not the least striving for effect, hardly an attempt to give anything an evidential bearing. It was, indeed, a wonderful thing that Jesus Christ should rise again from the dead; but it was an integral part of the wonderful life of a wonderful Person. Being what he was, he could not remain under the power of death; he must have risen from the dead and lived again.

And, as has, indeed, been noted already, the resurrection-life is not merely a continued life of the soul having an accidental connection with a bodily or spectral form. That self-same body, of which the blessed hands and feet had been pierced with nails that they might be fastened to the cross, and the sacred side had been torn open by the soldier's spear, that self-same body which had been wrapped in grave-clothes and laid in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, came forth alive from the tomb on Easter morning. There was no suffering then, and no pain. The marks of the nails and the spear still remained, but there was nothing else to tell of the agony, the exhaustion, the endurance of death. In conquering death, the Lord had passed beyond the possibility of suffering and had entered upon an immortal youth. We see indications, to be sure — and of these something must be said presently — that a body raised from death into the new life has powers and faculties in some ways different from those which belong to it while it is yet subject to death; yet it was identically the same body as that which had been crucified, dead, and buried. It was no case of substitution, or even of what we know as development; the body from which the soul had departed was laid in the grave before sunset on Friday; on Sunday before the sun had arisen the soul had returned and the body was instinct with life.

Nor was it in any sense like a recovery from sickness or infirmity or wounds. The risen Christ entered at once upon a life of perfect health and vigor; death, weakness, pain had no more dominion over him. Yet with men and women he conversed, and walked, and ate; he reasoned and expostulated; he taught, and comforted, and prophesied. It seemed in a way strange indeed; but the next notable thing that must have occurred after the death of the Son of Man was his resurrection from the dead, and next after that must have been his ascension, and that, too, with a view to his return. And thus at Jerusalem and in Galilee, with Saint Peter and Saint James alone, with the eleven apostles, with the 500 disciples, the Lord manifested himself, and by the very fact of his living made it evident that he was alive. The

fact was, after all, in its statement and in its apprehension, a simple one; its meaning and its application, as in the case of all divine facts and truths, were far-reaching and inexhaustible. But the first question is as to the fact; when this is accepted, we may inquire into its manifold meaning.

We are studying the great forty days as those who accept as true the statements preserved for us in the Gospels. We should accept them—having, as we are convinced, the strongest reasons for accepting them—even if there were serious difficulties and hindrances in the way. But the whole is so simple and yet so strong, the narrative bears such evidence of its own truthfulness, that it would argue far greater credulity to reject it than to accept it. And when we consider that the life and the work of the apostles, as they carried their Master's message and bore witness to him in all parts of the world, put their conviction to the proof, and applied every possible test to their sincerity and their truthfulness, we see that the proof of Christ's resurrection is not exhausted when we have closed the few pages in which it was recorded by the evangelists. Nor was it the apostles alone that bore witness to this great fact. There can hardly have been one of the more than five hundred who had seen the risen Lord, that was not called upon to suffer, in greater or less degree, for his testimony to that truth. The question between the Christians and their opponents was for a long time a question of fact, as Festus saw when the Jews brought Saint Paul before his judgment seat: they "had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive."¹ No falsehood, no unreality, no deception, could have inspired those early Christians to do and to suffer that which they gladly did and suffered that they might testify to their knowledge of the Resurrection. Nothing but truth, and undoubting confidence in truth, could have given such courage to Peter, who but a little before had told a barefaced falsehood because he trembled at a woman's taunt or feared a soldier's jibe, when he declared to the excited populace in Solomon's Porch that God had raised from the dead the Prince of Life whom they had killed, or to make the same affirmation even more boldly before Annas and Caiaphas themselves, with the rulers, and elders, and scribes of the Jewish people.²

And what Saint Peter did, the other believers did. The narrative of the Acts, the teaching of the epistles, the traditions in which many of the works of the apostles and early disciples were handed down to history, all point to the same conviction and the same assurance; of this we cannot doubt. How, then, can that to which they witnessed in the sight of the sword, and the cross, and the flame—nay, even unto death in its most cruel and dreadful forms—be other than true? And their own conviction they imparted to others, who were no less willing to suffer for it, knowing that they had a living Lord and Master, a Savior who had conquered death, in whose strength they might meet it, and in whose life they, too, might rise victorious. And at least in one instance, and that most remarkable, one who had resisted all external evidence, and had been unwilling to believe, was given a vision of the risen Lord in his glory, and heard him speak but a few words, when lo, the conviction that Jesus Christ was alive in a resurrection-life nerved him for acts of bravery and self-denial almost unparalleled on earth, and made the name of Saint Paul in itself almost a sufficient proof of the Resurrection. His early epistles, probably the very first part of the New Testament that was committed to writing, prove that he both believed and taught this great fact as the foundation of all Christian faith and the inspiration of all Christian life.

And in all this the testimony of evangelists, and apostles, and disciples is the more strong because it is so utterly free from any attempt to frame formal evidence or to argue as if for a disputed case. They knew the Resurrection as a fact, and they could not doubt the evidence that they had for its truth; but one can hardly imagine them devoting themselves, in the face of danger, and privation, and suffering, merely to the maintenance of the reality of an historic

¹ Acts xxv, 19.² Acts iii, 15, iv, 10.

fact, surrendering their lives rather than fail to confess and proclaim it. It was more to them than an event in history; it had a moral and a spiritual value; it affected them and their relations to God; it had given them a new life, which came from their risen Lord, which depended upon and flowed from his life; and to that resurrection-life they traced all that in them was true, and pure, and strong in character or conduct. Had the Lord not risen, they would have had, indeed, a perfect example of holy living, setting the pattern of patience and humility; and they would have had lessons of truth, spoken as truth had never been spoken before; but both the pattern of living and the teaching of truth would have been so far above men that they could have but looked at them in admiration, perhaps made some feeble effort to reach them, and certainly have fallen back in despair. The sealed grave of the great Example and Teacher would have been the sealed grave of the noble aspirations which he had kindled.

But the life of the risen Lord—that life which had passed through death, that life which belonged to him as the victorious Son of Man—was a life which was to be communicated to all his people. As they were incorporated into him, they died to sin by partaking of his death; they were buried with him by their baptism into his death, that they might be planted together with his resurrection;¹ that is to say, that they might enter into his risen life, and so have a part in the blessed results of all that he had done when he had lived the perfect life of earth, and find his lessons of truth not above them, but written on their hearts and in their souls and inspiring their thoughts, and words, and actions. And the conviction of the truth of all this—none the less strong because it could not be put into words, none the less certain because it might not be readily transferred from one to another—was a proof that the Lord was indeed living; and men of all succeeding generations, as they have entered into the life of the risen Lord, have had a proof of that life. The strongest evidence for physical life, as has been said above, is the fact of that life; it is not the least strong evidence for the resurrection-life of Jesus Christ, in all its wondrous and varied power, that it has been experienced and known throughout the ages. This spiritual force—this mystical power, if one may use the word without being misunderstood—cannot be ignored by anyone who accepts the Scriptures of the New Testament or recognizes the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church of Christ. And it would be most interesting and instructive, did space permit, to look at the several manifestations of the risen Christ, as they are recorded, and see how each in its place taught this truth, or at least prepared the minds of the disciples to receive it.

¹ Romans vi, 5.



FORETELLING THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RESURRECTION AS TEACHING IMMORTALITY.

WE must not fail to note how the Resurrection of our Lord has given an answer—though certainly in a most unexpected way—to one of the great questions which has engaged the anxious thoughts of men from the beginning. Since our first parents were driven forth from Eden, the great fact of death has been ever in the thoughts and before the eyes of men, and they have asked, in anxious distress of mind and soul, whether it is indeed the end. They have been unwilling to confess this, and still more unwilling to believe it; but apart from a revelation, it has been impossible really to justify the hope that life is prolonged after death has put a close to the activities of the body. The popular idea, such as it was, was of a shadowy and unreal existence, not a continuance of the life of the man; the philosophers had a somewhat more worthy idea, but it was hardly in any way more clear or satisfactory. While Cicero was reading his Plato, he believed that the souls of men—or at any rate of philosophers—were immortal; but when he closed the book and thought the matter over, he had very serious doubts. In like manner Seneca could argue for the immortality of the soul with all the skill of his well-trained intellect; but when the news was brought him of the death of a friend, the arguments went for nothing. Even the Jewish people, who had the sanction of revelation for belief in this great truth, and it was imperfectly yet really revealed, could not take hold of it as a great and certain fact. We need to stand beside the open sepulcher, and see the once crucified Lord in all the might of his new life, and hear his voice heralding his authority; we need to enter into somewhat of the meaning of that new life, before we can gain a sure answer to the great question of immortality. For, strange as it may appear, the only satisfactory proof of the immortality of the soul is the resurrection of the body. There is little that is convincing, and very little that is satisfying, in the thought that one who has died may be in some shadowy state of existence, which is not really life in the sense in which we use the word. We feel, even if we do not confess, that a man, really to live, must have all the component parts of human nature; and that means that without the body man is imperfect. Into that state of imperfection which is brought about by the separation of soul and body, as death for the time gains the victory, the Lord entered, when upon the cross he committed his spirit into the hands of the Father; but from it he returned, entering upon a perfect immortality, when he took again his body and truly rose from death. And from that time he has had the true immortality. His life did not remain under the power of death, but it conquered death, and therefore can never be subject to it again; and we look to the risen Lord for our proof of immortality. Or if our thoughts turn to the blessedness of the holy dead, and we know that they are yet living though we do not see their forms or hear their voices, it is because we are assured that they are asleep and resting in him who died and rose again, and that in him they too shall rise when he shall return in the glory of his kingdom. Thus the world, as it has come to believe in Christ, has gained the assurance of that which it has sought in vain in the pages of philosophers or the parables of nature. Immortality is no longer an illusive dream of the student, a baseless hope of the votary of truth; it is a fact, revealed in the risen life of the Son of Man, and to be realized in the future life of those who have lived and died, and are to rise again, in him.

But although the Lord rose from the dead, taking again the self-same body that had been laid in the grave, yet it was, as has indeed been intimated more than once already, unto newness of life. Even for him, whose life among men had been all-holy, there were new powers gained by the victory over death. We know this, when we see him standing on the Easter morning by

the opened tomb, not as one beginning to recover from the weakness to which suffering and pain have brought him, nor as one feeling his way back into a former condition, but as one who has left at once and forever all possibilities of pain and suffering, and as one who has passed beyond his former state, by a strange and difficult path, into something new, and bright, and enduring. We see it, as we go with him that evening on the long road to Emmaus, and then learn that he has quickly returned thence to give his apostles at Jerusalem the blessing of peace. We are further assured of it, as we hear his words, which tell of his sufferings only as a necessary preliminary to his entrance into his glory, and to the proclamation of his truth and his redemption to all the nations. All the events and all the teaching of the forty days look forward.

And in the change that thus came to the Lord, we get some idea of what Saint Paul means in the fifteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, where he speaks of the natural body that is sown or buried and the spiritual body which the same body is when it is raised. We have no English word that rightly expresses that which the apostle here puts in contrast with "spiritual"; but as this means something in which the spirit, that noblest and highest part of man's nature, rules and holds dominion, so the other, for which we need some such word as "soulish," denotes that which is ruled and governed by the lower part of man's non-material nature, the animal soul. Such is the argument: "It is sown a soulish [or, animal] body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a soulish body, there is also a spiritual body. 'And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.'" Such is the contrast between soul and spirit, between that which merely lives and that which gives life, and the contrast between a body in which, surrounded as it is by the things of earth, the soul must perforce rule, and a body which is fitted for the heavenly life and which, therefore, is guided and controlled by the spirit. Of what the change shall be in the risen bodies of the saints we gain some idea from that which is told us of the risen body of their Lord. His flesh, to be sure, saw no corruption, and the wondrous change exhibited when he rose must have begun immediately upon his death, as seems to be shown by the blood and water that flowed from his pierced side. The renewed life of those who sleep in him cannot be attained in every particular as was his; but that his is the pattern for all his people — nay, that all their life is in him and from him — we are expressly told.

It was in this new life that the Lord breathed on his apostles, to give them an inspiration of authority; it was in this new life that he had all power given unto him in heaven and in earth; and in this new life it was that he gave commandments to his apostles as to the way in which they should carry on his work and prepare the world for his return. How for him it differed, in its methods and its results, from that earlier life before death, we can do little but conjecture; we hardly know more than that the one was fitted for the perfect service of the Father here on earth, in the courts of the great temple, and that the other was fitted for the perfect service of the Father in heaven, in the most holy place. The natural or "soulish" body that rightly does its part in the world of natural or "soulish" life, is preparing itself for loftier duties and greater privileges when it shall become a spiritual body and take its part in the world of spiritual life. Until he had died and risen again, the Lord could not, although he was perfect God and perfect Man, enter upon his work as Mediator and Intercessor. The great High Priest must go within the veil with that blood which tells at once of life and of death; even he was made perfect through sufferings and brought to glory by entering, in the fullness of his humanity, upon the spiritual life. So we his people must, in the fullness of our humanity, come to his life, most of us by death and resurrection, those of us who remain until his coming by that change that shall pass upon them that have not fallen asleep.

So it is that all the events and all the utterances of the great forty days have really a spiritual and prophetic meaning. That meaning has been suggested in part; its exposition must



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be left for more full commentaries and discourses. But when we remember that we trace back to these days, in large part if not altogether, our persuasion of the value of the Old Testament Scriptures and of the way in which they should be studied, that we find there the charter of the Christian Church with the outlines of its duties and responsibilities, that there we read the charge given to the apostles and the promise of a continued presence through all the days until the age should end, that we find also in these few words the proclamation of the unlimited and unfailing might of the God-Man, and how in act and word he foretold the completion of his work for his brethren and that the saved should be brought in full number to the eternal shore, we cannot fail to see how much the Christian ages have been indebted to that which the risen Lord said and did while he was awaiting the time of his ascension. Still further, when we consider that we must learn from what the apostles did and taught after the Ascension somewhat of that which the Lord spoke to them concerning the kingdom of God, we must acknowledge that much of the life of the Church and of its members draws its inspiration from this same time. They were days of God's working; God's days, as when in the physical creation he was preparing the way for the first Adam and for the natural life of man that should come from him; God's days, having in each the potency of a thousand years, in which he was making preparation for the revelation of the second Adam and of the spiritual life which he had attained and which he was to impart to his people. We shall not know all that they mean until that day when all things shall be subdued unto him, and he shall be subject to the Father, and God shall be all in all.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ASCENSION.

THE narrative of the Ascension is very brief. Saint Luke, both in his Gospel and in the Acts, seems to connect it closely with other events of which he writes. In the Gospel, however, the form of expression does not preclude the possibility of an interval of time; the words of the Acts seem to place the Ascension immediately after the command to the apostles to await in Jerusalem the coming of the Spirit and the promise that they should receive authority that they might be the Lord's witnesses unto the ends of the earth. And so great an event might well have followed upon such wondrous words. The apostles, and possibly others, had gone with Christ to the side of the Mount of Olives, over against the city of God and the site of the temple in which his glory had dwelt. They were at or near Bethany, the quiet village where, in the time of his ministry, the Lord had found a resting place at the home of a family whom he loved. It would seem, from the fact that the Ascension must have been unobserved of the passers-by, that it was in the night-time, even as the Transfiguration, which gave a glimpse of Ascension glory, was at night; it may well be that the Ascension, like the Resurrection, was "very early in the morning," as the rays of the sun were first seen and the priests in the temple were preparing for the first acts of worship on the new day. Standing there, with his chosen ones about him, his work on earth finished, his work in the heavens waiting for him to enter upon it, he lifted up his hands and blessed his disciples. And even as he was blessing them he was parted from them, and lifted up above them, and presently a cloud hid him from their sight.

They saw him no more; but as they were gazing upward, two angels stood by them, sent to bid them remember that their Lord was to come again in like manner as he had gone from

them. That cloud, which partly manifests and partly conceals the divine glory, drew the veil between the outer parts of God's great temple, where the great sacrifice for sin had been presented and the atoning blood had been shed, and that most holy place, into which the High Priest alone could enter, that he might stand in the presence of the Father and plead the merits of the great Sacrifice. It was enough for the people of Christ to know that, to complete his work, he had gone for a time from earth; it was their sufficient lesson of duty that they should be bidden to remember that he was to return. They needed no further assurance of his life; that he had sufficiently proved during the great forty days; they had not seen him constantly during that time, yet after he had been manifested to them they knew that he was living, and that for evermore; and so when he was taken up from them, they still knew that he was verily and indeed alive, in all the might of his manhood, and that the God-Man was now glorified with all the glory of the Godhead. They knew not how brief his absence might be; in fact they thought that he would soon return, even as the High Priest in the temple came back to his life among men at eventide of the same day on which he went into the awful presence of God. And yet they knew that he was to wait, and that they were to wait. They were to wait for the promise of the Father, and tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they should be "endued with power from on high;" they were to be his witnesses, not only in the country in which he had preached the Gospel of the kingdom, but unto the uttermost parts of the earth; and they must have understood that the words applied to him — for he himself had thus quoted them — in which David spoke of his Lord as to sit at the right hand of the King, Jehovah, until his enemies should be made his footstool. With minds filled with the thought of the glory upon which he had entered, and of the blessed work which he had left them to do, they returned to Jerusalem, we are told, with great joy. They could not mourn as those might have mourned who thought that their Master had been taken away from their head that day; he had but gone away for a time, as a King who was to receive for himself a kingdom and to return, or as a High Priest who was to complete a sacrificial act beyond the sight of the worshipers without, and then to come forth with words of blessing. They were to make ready against his coming again, and to take care that he should not find them unprepared. What wonder, then, that the feeling of joy, both for him and for themselves, was uppermost in their minds; or that they were, in the days of expectation, ever in the temple, still to them a sacred place, praising and blessing God?

While it is to Saint Luke that we look for the only accounts that tell us at all in detail of the Ascension, it is well to remember that Saint John also mentions it as a great and momentous fact. Not to speak of the words of Christ which he records as spoken a year before the Passion, declaring that they should see the Son of Man ascending to the place whence he had come to earth,¹ Saint John tells us how on the morning of his resurrection he sent by Mary Magdalen a message to the disciples, which should tell them that he had risen in order that he might ascend to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God. So also Saint Peter preached the Ascension on the day of Pentecost, when he declared that what the people saw and heard in wonder was due to the gift of the Holy Spirit who had been sent by the risen Christ, exalted by the right hand of God;² and later, when he wrote his first epistle, the same apostle said of his Master that he was gone into heaven and was "at the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him."³ And Saint Paul, writing to the Ephesians from his confinement at Rome, teaches the Ascension as one of the great facts in regard to Christ Jesus, seeing the fulfillment of the words of the psalm, "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men," in that he who "descended first into the lower parts of the earth" had "ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things."⁴ The argument of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews largely turns upon the

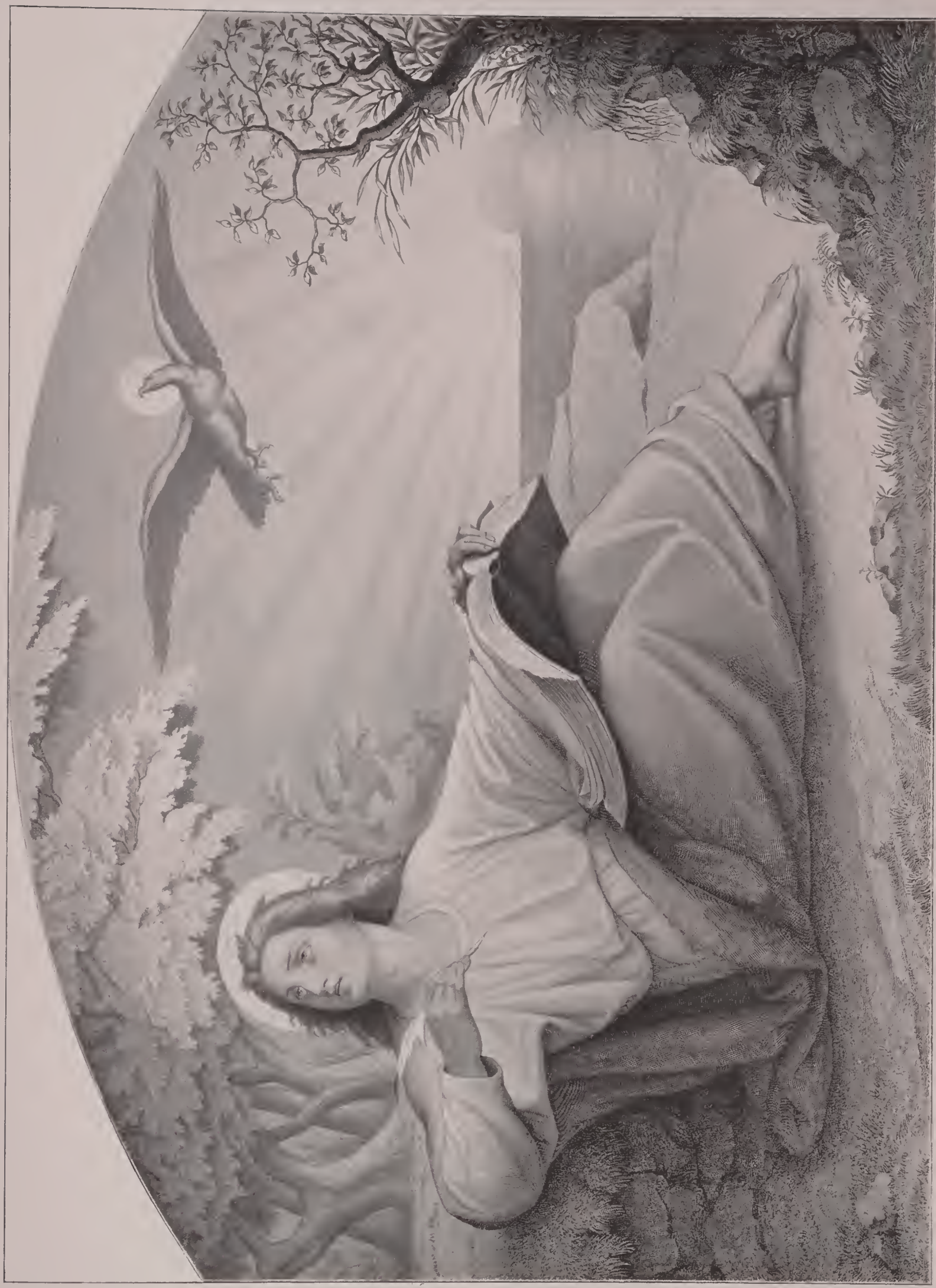
¹ John vi, 62.² Acts ii, 32, 33.³ I. Peter iii, 22.⁴ Ephesians iv, 8-10.

Ascension, as he lays stress on the priesthood of Christ having its completion when he made his one great entrance into the most holy place.

And the visions of the Lord in glory bear witness to the same great fact, and tell us somewhat of him as he now is and of his work for us. On the face of the first martyr, as he stood before the Sanhedrim, a youth and alone, there shone a radiance such as seemed to belong to the face of an angel in the very presence of God; and he declared that he saw heaven opened, and the Son of Man, for whom he was ready to die, standing at the right hand of God. Devout writers have noted that though elsewhere we read of our Lord as sitting in heaven, to denote the majesty and dignity of his kingly power, Saint Stephen saw him in the posture of one who was ready to render assistance, the Champion defending the cause of his servant. And all who suffer for Christ's sake, all who need his help in the warfare and struggle of life, may well believe that Christ stands as their champion, his glory brightening the faces and cheering the hearts of his people. Again, Saul the persecutor had a vision of the ascended Lord, seeing the bright light that came from his presence, hearing his words, and gaining such a conviction of the fact that it was indeed the Jesus that he was persecuting whose voice he heard and whose glory he beheld, that nothing afterward could shake his faith. "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" so he wrote in reply to those who would deny his apostolate; he had had a revelation of truth in having a vision of Christ. And still again, Saint John, the last of the twelve to be left on earth, in the lonely isle that is called Patmos, sent there by a wicked emperor "for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ," saw the Lord in all his glory, standing in the midst of the golden candlesticks that represented his Church; and he, who had leaned on the Lord's breast at the Supper and whom the Lord had loved, when he saw him "fell at his feet as dead." So from the ascended Christ there have come visions of his truth in all the ages, some to call and convince the ignorant and those that are out of the way, and some to cheer and encourage the saints; the former have learned to believe, the latter have had somewhat of the rewards of faith.

We need not ask where is that heaven, the plan of the revelation of God's glory, the mercy seat for propitiation, to which our Lord passed from earth. It is enough to know that he, the God-Man, with his glorified body—a body spiritual, but none the less real—is in the place of highest honor in the universe of God. He has carried our nature, united to his divine nature, above that of angels and of all the heavenly host; he has presented his great sacrifice, the only true and efficacious sacrifice, to his Father who gave him to be the Redeemer and Savior of men; he has prayed for, and has obtained for us, the promised Spirit, and that Spirit has come to dwell among and in his people; he has become head over all things to his Church, the blessed company of all who believe; he sits as king, ruling his willing subjects with love and bringing his enemies to acknowledge his rightful authority; he awaits the time when he may return, when all things shall be subdued unto him, when, in actual fact, as now in possibility and gracious design, all things shall be gathered together in him, and when his Church, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," shall be presented to him as his Bride, and the faithful shall be called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

The Lord ascended in triumph. Victor over sin and death, though victor after a hard struggle and by means of apparent defeat, he sits in glory; victor, he stands to help us; victor, he pleads our cause; victor, he awaits the time of his triumph. It would have been defeat if he had escaped the cross, if he had not risen from death, if he had remained on earth. It is a proof, did we but realize it, of the truth of his Gospel and of the reality of his work among men to-day, that we do not see him dwelling on earth. We touch him, now that he has ascended, as we could not have touched him during the great forty days. The inspiration and strength of all the Christian centuries has been the glorified Christ; the life of the Church, the life of each Christian disciple, has been the life of the ascended Lord; and each has borne



JOHN OF PATMOS.

witness to that which is, as we use the word, supernatural, and which yet is in most absolute harmony with all else that God has made or does. "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Yet the Church and each of her members, though living a life of faith, based on and nourished by love, is supported by hope of that which is yet to come, and which is to be the crown and perfection of all the Lord's own work, all the work of his body, all that has been done by and through each of its members. There is still a manifestation to be made, and for it each faithful one waits, eagerly though patiently; "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

"Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Samuel R. H.



RAPHAEL.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

BOOK XIV.

FROM THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT TO THE DEATH OF ST. PAUL.

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Yours sincerely
J. M. Gibson

BOOK XIV.

FROM THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT TO THE DEATH OF ST. PAUL.

CHAPTER I.

THE ADVENT OF THE SPIRIT.

OUR period lies just within the forty years which extend from the Ascension of our Lord to the destruction of Jerusalem (A. D. 30-70) — a time of surpassing interest as at once the close of the old dispensation and the opening of the new; the last years of the Temple, the first years of the Church.

It was in the year 30 of our era—allowing for the four years of acknowledged error in the reckoning of the date of our Lord's birth—that Messiah the Prince entered his capital as its King, and the Temple as its Lord. Had he been received even at that eleventh hour, the fate of Jerusalem would have been averted, and from the Temple would have flowed the river of the water of life to gladden all the world. But the Lord of the Temple was despised and rejected, forced to turn his back upon the holy place, and to pronounce the word of doom, "Behold your house"—my Father's house no longer—"is left unto you desolate." Not the Temple, then, but the humble upper room¹ became the birthplace of the Church.

For forty years the old Temple and the new Church will stand side by side—in the colossal pile, with all its great historic memories, death; in the little upper room, life, new life, with all its potency and promise. As the forty years roll by we shall see Judaism waxing old and ready to perish till it finally expires in blood and fire; and side by side with it we shall see the infant Church, full of life and promise, setting out from its manger-like birthplace to the conquest of the world for its Lord.

The materials at our disposal are rich and valuable; for we have no less than nineteen separate documents which purport to be the literary product of the time, and which, after having been subjected to the fires of adverse criticism, are now more fully authenticated than ever. Besides the three Synoptical Gospels, which we do not reckon in our enumeration because they deal exclusively with the preceding period, we have thirteen letters of Saint Paul, two of Saint Peter, one of Saint James the brother of our Lord, one of Saint Jude, the anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews, and, most important of all for our purpose, the historical book generally known as the Acts of the Apostles, all probably written within the limits of our period—the whole of the New Testament with the exception of the writings of Saint John.

It would be out of place here to enter into the intricate discussions by which these conclusions have been assailed on the one hand and supported on the other. We cannot say, indeed, that the question is closed in regard to all of them; but it is admitted on all hands that the trend of recent investigations has been more and more toward the vindication of the antiquity and genuineness of the sacred books. As, however, the Acts of the Apostles is the authority on

¹ Acts i, 13.

which we rely exclusively for the first five years, and mainly for the rest, it may be well to call attention to what we may speak of as its triumphant emergence from the fires of hostile criticism to which it in particular has been subjected. It is now nearly a century since Dr. Paulus of Jena began the attack, and more than half a century since Ferdinand Christian Baur renewed it with a vigor, determination, and apparent success which seemed to many to put an end to the controversy, and to settle it forever that the Acts of the Apostles was no contemporary history, as had been supposed, but a compilation of the second century. He was seconded and followed by many able coadjutors known as the Tübingen School, who were regarded by many as the oracles of the age. But their conclusions are now discredited, and the very foundation on which they built them has given way. One position after another has been established, narrowing the margin of doubt more and more till it has become almost certain that we have in our chief historical book the work of a contemporary and, for a large portion of what he records, an eyewitness. There is, first, the certainty that the third Gospel and the book of the Acts are from the same hand. On this point even Renan, in his Introduction to "The Apostles" (X), says, "This is a conclusion which has never been seriously disputed." There is next the certainty that those sections in which the first person is used—the "we sections," as they are called—are the work of an eyewitness. Further, the application of close criticism to the entire book has made it more and more apparent, that it is all of a piece, so that the supposition of its being a late compilation in which the "we" sections were used as material has been effectually disposed of. Finally, recent investigations have brought to light so many evidences of the author's minute acquaintance with the history of the time, as, for instance, the perfect accuracy with which he uses the varied, ever variable designations of the local authorities, that it has become as certain as can be that it is the work of a contemporary. In this connection it is most interesting and reassuring to find in a recent great work this candid confession: "For years, with much interest and zeal, but with little knowledge, I followed the critics and accepted their results; but after studying the questions on the spot found myself obliged completely to give up those theories of the late origin of the books of the New Testament which had thrown discredit on their authenticity. And this was especially the case with respect to the Acts of the Apostles."¹

We may, then, fairly conclude that in using the Acts of the Apostles as material for this history we are building on solid ground. It is true that there are still men of learning who doubt, but it will be found on examination that the grounds on which they doubt are not critical but dogmatic.

It is the settled prejudice against the supernatural which determines the position they take. This is indeed openly acknowledged. Weizsäcker candidly acknowledges the transparency and apparent truthfulness of the narrative, and, in fact, is artless enough to caution his readers against being misled by this; as when, in speaking of the story of the early years he says, "the clearness of the narrative, with its well-rounded outline, is eminently adapted to influence us unduly in its favor."² But why unduly? Because of the many things in it which, he says, are "inconsistent with history." Let these inconsistencies with history be examined, and it will be found that the inconsistency is not with history but with the theory he starts with, namely, that there was no real resurrection of Jesus, and no real advent of the Spirit. Denying these great facts *in limine*, he of course finds the whole story full of inconsistencies and violent improbabilities. It is fully admitted that the early history of the Church is such as cannot be accounted for, if God is left out of it; but why should God be left out? The marvelous growth of Christianity in the face of obstacles quite insurmountable by any movement merely human is a great fact in the history of the world which happily no sane man can possibly deny; and if the hand

¹ Ramsay, "The Church in the Roman Empire," Preface, p. viii.

² "The Apostolic Age of the Christian Church," p. 21.

of God was in it, why attempt to discredit a story of its origin which not only fully and satisfactorily accounts for the great result, but is so straightforward and consistent with itself as to be, by the testimony of those who try to discredit it, "eminently adapted to influence us unduly in its favor." Once accept the great facts of the resurrection of Christ and the advent of the Spirit, and everything is accounted for; and, as we shall see from time to time as we proceed, we not only find the account given by our historian eminently natural, but the history itself is ever furnishing new evidence to the reality of the great facts on which it is based.

And this brings us to the great theme of the present chapter—the advent of the Spirit. "A body hast thou prepared me" is the utterance of the Christ, which applies to this advent as well as to the former one. The number of the names is about 120, and they are all with one accord in one place, a body of believers waiting—waiting for the Spirit to animate the body and make it thrill with life. The one advent follows the other according to the principle, "first that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual;" first the Word made flesh and dwelling among men, then the Word become Spirit and dwelling in his body, the Church. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." Listen! "Suddenly there came from heaven a sound"—not a blast, only a sound ("thou hearest the sound thereof")—"as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." The whole air of the upper room is electric with a Presence which now shows itself in a sudden illumination, making on all who witness it the impression of tongues of fire alighting on each of them, as if at some mystic touch innumerable carbon points, all dull and lusterless till now, had sprung into flame and filled the place with light. The many branched golden candlestick is now all aglow. How supremely fitting are the signs of this great Advent, this coming of God in Christ by his Spirit to give life and power to his body, the Church, sent forth with new fires of love to make known to every nation under heaven the word of the Gospel of peace!

"Thou canst not tell whence it cometh." But are we not told that it was "from heaven"? Yes; but what does that mean? Does it mean from some distant star, or from some "happy land far, far away"? Why should it? Had not Christ taught continually that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand"? And was it not now nearer than ever? Let us not forget the words, "Lo, I am with you alway." This assurance of the Lord himself, given ere he returned to his Father, should forbid us thinking of the Ascension in a geographical or astronomical sense. It was when still well in sight of his disciples that a cloud received him and veiled his transition to the realms of the unseen. And, though when the cloud cleared away he was no longer in their sight, he was with them still, nearer than ever. We have less difficulty in realizing this now that modern science has come to our help, taking the old meaning out of up and down, and telling us of an unseen universe which lies all about us now, of which the seen may be only a passing manifestation; and not the man of science only but the poet teaches us the same lesson, confirming it out of his own consciousness, or rather out of the Universal Consciousness of which he is the exponent:

"For ever am I conscious, moving here,
That should I step a little space aside,
I pass the boundary of some glorified
Invisible domain—it lies so near!
Yet nothing know we of that dim frontier
Which each must cross, whatever fate betide,
To reach the heavenly cities where abide
(Thus Sorrow whispers) those that are most dear,
Now all transfigured in celestial light! . . . "1

¹ Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

As the Ascension was not necessarily a going up, so the outpouring of the Spirit was not properly a coming down. We speak of the falling of the dew, but dew does not fall. It is ever diffused unseen through all the air; but when the necessary conditions are present it is disengaged, and on each grass blade there gleams a diamond. So was it when, through prayer and waiting upon God throughout the ten days, the conditions were prepared, and presently there appeared, not dewdrops but firedrops upon each one of them. Whence came this firedew? From heaven, no doubt; from the heaven which "lies about us in our infancy" and is never far from us, though we may be far from it, and which, though the consciousness of it may be quite lost, can be restored, is restored, to those who receive the kingdom of God as a little child — out of that heaven the Spirit came to them, comes to us, in fulfillment of the old promise, "I will be as the dew unto Israel."

Have we here the dreaded supernatural? We do not insist on the term. If the definition of "nature" is made so large as to embrace the spirit world and all its phenomena, including the action of him who is the Father of our spirits, then we are not anxious to insist on anything being supernatural. But if nature be understood to mean physical nature, then assuredly we have here that which is above and beyond it. The Spirit of God has been at work in the world from the beginning, so that there is no breach of continuity; but a new cycle of his working is opening out, so that new and strange phenomena may be reasonably expected.

To one who knew nothing of electricity the flashes which mark the passing of the current at particular points would seem a portent. So, also, to the man who knows nothing of the electricity of the unseen universe all spiritual phenomena must seem portentous and incredible, and most incredible of all, perhaps, the outward signs by which on the great day of Pentecost their reinforcement was announced; but to the man who realizes that this heavenly electricity was beginning to manifest itself under the new conditions, as never before, it will seem most natural that there should have been such outward signs, and quite appropriate that the new spiritual power should show itself in the minds as well as in the hearts of those who received it, endowing them with the strange ability to express their thoughts in the tongues of the diverse peoples then gathered in Jerusalem.

The new era is a distinct advance on all that has gone before. The advent of the Spirit takes us a step higher in the evolution of the kingdom. This is evident on the principle already referred to, "first that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual;" and it is distinctly acknowledged by our Lord himself when, on the eve of his departure, he says, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." We have seen that the Ascension was not geographical or astronomical; but a real ascension it was; it was a stepping up from the plane of the natural to the plane of the spiritual. It is in the full consciousness of this advance that the apostle says, even "though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." It is a great thing that God should speak to the Fathers by the prophets; a much greater that in the last days he should speak to men in his Son, but the greatest of all that he should dwell in them by his Spirit. It is the same Spirit who in creation brooded over the face of the deep, who moved holy men of old to speak the oracles of God, who dwelt in the human nature of Jesus of Nazareth; but now he comes, in all the fullness and tenderness of the completed revelation of God in Christ, to dwell in all who will receive him. In the Old Testament times there was, as it were, a sprinkling; now it is to be a pouring: in the time of the Incarnation the Spirit descended upon One;¹ now it is to be upon all, on men and women, on masters and slaves, on Jews and Gentiles, on young and old, in fulfillment of the ancient oracle, "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh."

"Thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." Not one of the hundred and twenty could tell. Not one of them could in the dimmest way forecast the issues in the years

¹ Mark i, 10, 11.



BIDA.

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES ON THE ROAD TO CAESAREA.

and centuries to follow. They were conscious of new life and power which they knew to be from God; and, accordingly surrendering themselves to the heavenly impulse, they went forth in their Master's name, though like Abraham not knowing whither, to tell his story, to bear witness to his resurrection, to proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins, to persuade men everywhere to press into the kingdom of heaven, brought now within the reach of all. How they fare in their new endeavor the sequel will declare.

CHAPTER II.

THE INFANT CHURCH.

THE Church was born, not made. It was no mere society or association into which men organized themselves for religious purposes. Like him from whom it sprang, it was born from above, "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The advent of the Spirit was the birth of the Church.

For we must not confound the Church, as many do, with the kingdom of God or of heaven, of which Christ had so much to say in the days of his flesh. The work of Christ was not so much to set up the kingdom of God as to proclaim it; to tell how near it was if men would only lift up eyes of faith and look, how gracious a welcome it had for all who would only come to the gate and knock. The Church, on the other hand, though a divine institution, was still an institution — something which had to be begun, to be instituted, to have its foundations laid, and then to be built. The work of Christ on earth in relation to the Church was this laying of the foundation, the preparation for its advent. Hence it is that we hear so very little of it in these early days. He does not even mention it till he is within sight of the end, when at Cæsarea Philippi he begins to tell his disciples of his approaching death. And what he says of it seems expressly intended to keep them from supposing that it is already in existence, "Upon this rock I will build my church." The hundred and twenty in the upper room retained still the familiar designation by which they were known throughout the earthly ministry of Christ. They were his disciples. They formed a school, the school of Christ. Not till the great day of Pentecost, when for the first time they were fully possessed by his Spirit, did they become members of Christ, "His body the Church," the relation of which to the kingdom may be put in this way, that it is a body set apart to seek first the kingdom of God, to pray and work for its coming, and to be the custodian of its keys.

From all this it is evident that what constitutes the Church is the presence and indwelling of the Spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." In the same way, and for the same reason, if any religious body have not the Spirit of Christ, it is none of his. It is not a question of orders or of ordinances; it is a question of the presence or absence of the Holy Spirit. The venerable Church Father, Irenæus, expresses it admirably in the memorable and oft-quoted sentence: "Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and every kind of grace."

The infant Church, thus born of the Spirit, at once begins to show signs of life. First it finds its voice: "They began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance;" and presently little knots of people gathered round the different speakers, here a group of Parthians, there a band of Medes, beyond a company of Elamites, farther on other nationalities, all marveling greatly because, as they put it, "we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." As the crowd increases, the groups become pressed together into a great concourse, and this calls out the natural leader of the hundred and twenty, the

Apostle Peter, who lifts up his voice, and probably in the Greek tongue, since that would be fairly understood by all, preaches the first Christian sermon, giving forth for the first time the Church's message to the world.

It is a new message; but it does not set aside the old. Christ had come not to destroy but to fulfill, and accordingly his apostle begins by making it plain that he is no apostle of revolution, that evolution rather is the word, for he shows how all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet; "And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh." This is a feature of the Gospel of Christ which ought never to be forgotten. It was not forgotten by the Apostle Paul, when, in preaching to the Athenians he quoted and confirmed the teaching of one of their own poets. Nor should it be forgotten in these days when the treasures of ancient wisdom are so faithfully and diligently explored. Let us rejoice in all the "broken lights" of other faiths, the stars in the night which heralded the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.

While the message of the new Church is set in no antagonism to any words of the wise, it is something over and above them all. It is no new philosophy. It is no fresh ritual. It is a testimony to the Christ of God and to his great kingdom which embraces all. Having shown its connection with the revelation of the past, the apostle proceeds to his great theme. He begins with the name of Jesus, not hesitating to speak of him as the Man of Nazareth, and then leads up his hearers step by step to the great conclusion: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

It seemed a word of doom. "Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ!" "Then our enemy is on the throne. He has all power in heaven and on earth. Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Not your *enemy*, but your Savior. It is the Prince of Peace, the King of Love, who sits upon the throne. This is the kingdom he preached and now has opened. Here are its keys: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

No wonder hard hearts were melted that day; and no wonder that the same great story of love divine should continue to melt hard hearts century after century, age after age, from then till now! The extension of the gift of the Holy Ghost to the multitude of new disciples meant, of course, the enlarging of the Church; for, as we have seen, where the Spirit is, there is the Church. So there were added to them about three thousand souls—not far from the Master's thirtyfold, in a single day. The fire symbol, however, is not repeated. This has marked the advent of the Spirit; but now that he is here, to abide with the Church forever, the old water symbol becomes the standing ordinance, according to the Master's word: "Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

It is an old sign put to a new use; and yet not wholly new, for it still keeps the old reference to repentance and the remission of sins which it had under the ministry of John. But, as water is a familiar symbol of the Spirit, it may well embrace the new gift of the Holy Ghost, now poured out in fulfillment of ancient prophecy.

There have been and still are controversies as to the outward rite. These may have their own importance; but they need not detain us in this hasty sketch. The mind is carried on at once to the great realities, "the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost." That the rite had now the double reference is plain not only from the story of the infant Church, but from the rebaptism, as recorded in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts, of those disciples at Ephesus who had not heard of the gift of the Spirit. They had already been baptized into the remission of sins (the baptism of John), but they were now baptized in the name of Jesus and, at the same time receiving the Holy Ghost, were incorporated into the Church of Christ.

So far, we see how the Church became enlarged by additions from without. By the delivery of her message she persuaded large numbers of the hearers to accept Christ as their Savior and King, and then received them into the Church by the rite of baptism. We are next permitted to see how she maintained and developed life within herself: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." In this brief statement we have some insight into the ordinances of the Church, by which she sought the edification of her own members. There is, first, the *teaching* of the apostles. This was distinct from the message to the world. It had, indeed, a separate place in the great commission: "Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"—so far the commission has been already followed, but it does not end here; the next thing is "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The proclamation of the message to lead men to repentance and acceptance of Christ as their Savior and King is one thing; the instruction of those within the Church is another. In modern preaching the two are more or less intermingled, but they should not be confounded. There is a striking instance of ignorance on this point in Selden's "Table Talk," where, in attempting to show the uselessness of sermons in a Christian country, like England, he says that the object of preaching is "to tell the news of Christ's coming into the world, and when that is done, or where it is known already, the preacher's work is done." As if the mere knowing that Christ has come into the world made people Christians, and not only so, but Christians so very good and strong that they could be left without any help, or guidance, or provision for the daily need! The apostles knew better. The great proclamation of the Gospel on the day of Pentecost had brought to Christ 3,000 souls, but well they knew that the work was just beginning, that the lambs must be fed, the sheep tended.

The prominence given to *fellowship*, which occupies the place next to teaching, shows that in the early days much was made of the mutual help which the members of the Church can give to one another in spiritual things. There was not only a receiving from the apostles but a sharing with one another. Then the ordinary intercourse of life was lifted to a higher plane and hallowed by "*the breaking of bread*," which recalled the time when the Lord and his disciples used to sit at the same table, and especially that night on which he was betrayed, when he instituted the sacred rite of the Supper and asked his disciples to do this in remembrance of him. The "*prayers*," with which the simple enumeration closes, included, beyond doubt, praise as well, all the worship of the Church, that which she offers to her Lord; for she is privileged not only to hear but to speak, not only to receive but to give. All is simple, natural, beautiful. There is no elaborate service, no gorgeous ritual, in this golden age of the Church's history.

That it was a golden age, indeed, is made still more apparent as we follow the sketch which gives us next a glimpse of the life of the Church—full of the soft sunlight of the dawn. Love is the presiding angel. Very fervent is their love to one another. "All that believed were together." There was true unity. Not that we are to suppose there was no difference of opinion. We read that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul;"¹ which is happily quite possible even among those who are far from being of one mind. They were a true brotherhood—not in spirit alone, for they made it their care to see that none of their number should lack the things needful for the body. There were rich and poor among them, but the rich reckoned not their wealth their own; they counted it a trust, and some of them gave it up to provide for those that lacked—a notable and noble example of true generosity; for there was no legislation, and no thought of it; there was no compulsion whatever; it was the spontaneous outcome of brotherly love. The working of this Christian love solved, for

¹ Acts iv, 32.



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THE LAST SUPPER.

a time at least, the problem of poverty in the Jerusalem Church; and if it only pervaded society as it then pervaded the Church, it would solve the gigantic problem of modern poverty; not by bringing about an artificial equality, which was not even aimed at in the early Church, but by insuring that no one should lack. Law may help to reduce inequalities; but only love—love everywhere diffused, as we believe it will be some time—can bring us the kingdom of heaven.

Not only was there fervent love to one another, but large-hearted charity to their brethren of the old faith. They continued “steadfastly with one accord in the temple.” After all that had happened, it would have been only human nature to turn their backs on the Temple, and never cross its threshold again. And had they entertained the modern notion of many narrow-minded people that they could not worship with those from whom they differed in opinion, they would have found it impossible to join in any of the Temple services. But “love suffereth long and is kind; . . . believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things;”¹ so they were able still to worship day by day in the Temple. And as love ruled their life, joy pervaded it, “breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people”²—a beautiful picture. It was the time of the Church’s child innocence. Heaven lay about her in her infancy. And we do not wonder that, with a message so clear and strong, with a worship so pure and simple, with a life so loving and so joyous, “the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved.”³

CHAPTER III.

HER WORK AND WARFARE.

THE absence of dates in our sole authority for the earliest years of the Church’s history is apt to mislead those who, failing to read between the lines, assume that the story is continuous. The fact is that the Acts of the Apostles is not so much a history as a book of days and of men—of great days and great men. After a slight introductory sketch of the forty-nine days preceding, there is a full account of the fiftieth day, the great day of the Advent of the Spirit, concluding with a picture of the infant Church, of which the Advent was the constitution. Immediately following this we have the story of another great day⁴ with what came to pass on the morrow;⁵ and then, after a few lines of general description, we have the story in full of the fate of Ananias and Sapphira—a very sad day; and so we are carried on by leaps and bounds as it were, from milestone to milestone, till we reach the conversion of Saint Paul, by which time we discover that we have traversed a period of nearly five years, though all we really have of it is a clear and full view of five or six specimen days. We may regret that for the rest we have only such general statements as “they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship,” “the Lord added to the Church daily,” “great grace was upon them all”; but it is plain that, unless the record had been extended to such dimensions as would have unfitted it for a place in the sacred Canon, it was far better to give a few vivid glimpses such as we have, setting the actors in full light, than to attempt to give the entire course of events in what must inevitably have been a dry and meager summary.

We may assume, then, that after the great day of Pentecost closing with such a marvelous accession to the membership of the newborn Church, there was a time of quiet growth, during

¹ I. Corinthians xiii, 4, 7 (Revised Version).

² Acts ii, 47 (Revised Version).

³ Acts ii, 47 (Revised Version).

⁴ Acts iii, iv, 1-4.

⁵ Acts iv, 5-31.



RAFAEL.

HEALING THE LAME MAN AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE.

which the new converts, continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, would be in course of preparation for aggressive work; and if we picture to ourselves what it must have been to deal with such a multitude of people, what organizing into classes would be necessary, and selection of leaders, and planning of courses of instruction, and arrangements for meetings, we can see how fully all the talents, not of the apostles only, but of all the original 120, would be in requisition. All this, however, is left to the imagination. It is read between the lines of the single verse which follows the mention of the number added to the Church the very first day.

Objections have been raised to the probability that the Church was allowed thus quickly to gather strength after the provocation which the events of Pentecost must have given to the authorities; but all is explained by the natural awe awakened in the minds of the priests and rulers by the tokens of a presence and a power which they could not but suspect at least to be of God. "Fear came upon every soul."

Under the shadow of this fear there may have been occasional opportunities for public preaching by the apostles during these months of comparative seclusion; but it seems more likely that the Church went quietly on its way, worshiping as before in the Temple, and in addition holding its own services in larger or smaller groups as was found convenient or possible, living the new, glad, and simple life, without ostentation and with much loving kindness and charity, so that they not only edified one another, but attracted those without—not in crowds any longer, but one by one as opportunities were afforded in the intercourse of daily life. The question "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" was still unanswered; but they were content to wait for the guidance of the Spirit before taking any very decided step. They did not wait in vain; for in course of time there came a day when Peter and John could not but lift up their voices in the most public place of concourse. They had been going up to the Temple at the usual time of afternoon worship. As they passed the gate Beautiful their attention was called to a poor cripple, whom they had, no doubt, seen many times before; for, lame from his birth, he had been carried every day by his friends to the same spot; but some impulse, which possibly they did not understand at the time, though afterward they would recognize it to have been of the Spirit, led them to stop. They had nothing to put into the outstretched hand; but there was something in his eyes that day which appealed to the Christ heart in them; so "Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us."

There is no reason to suppose that the apostles had power to heal every cripple they met; all was under the direction of the Spirit of Christ. It is still the same Jesus who, in the days of his flesh, made it his care to see that the patient's heart was open to God in the exercise of some degree of faith, before he would undertake his cure. If the Master's healing was so conditioned, much more may we assume a similar limitation in the servants'. Hence this scrutinizing glance, this reading of the man's soul, before the name of Christ could be invoked to work his cure. We may well believe that the poor cripple had some knowledge of Christ and some rudimentary faith in him. He must have often seen him during the last four years, often heard his voice, perhaps knew of his healing in the Temple some of the lame and blind;¹ and who knows what thoughts would often pass through his mind as he lay there day by day, and heard something of the story of Pentecost and caught some flying echoes of the apostles' witness to the resurrection of Jesus?

Is it unlikely that this very morning some disciple had talked to him, and told him that the Spirit of Christ was in his people and especially in his apostles? Might not this explain the wistful look which fascinated the two as they passed by? True, he only asked an alms; but this had been so long the summit of his daily ambition that it is not to be wondered at, even if vague thoughts of the love and power of Christ and of his apostles were stirring in his soul,

¹ Matthew xxi, 14.

that he should find it difficult to imagine anything better than the best he had known these forty years. But whether or not there was anything deeper in these eyes than found expression on his tongue, the apostle, after a few moments of earnest scrutiny, during which there would rise a fervent prayer to the risen Christ to give the needed guidance, spoke the word of power: "Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."¹

To encourage him, and help him to realize that this was no mockery of his weakness, but a genuine summons to new life, the apostle "took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength. And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God."²

Why is this work of healing told in such detail and given the place of prominence it holds in the record? Not merely as a seal of apostolic authority — though nothing could have served this purpose better; for the man on whom the cure was wrought was well known as a cripple all his life, so that there could be no mistake about it, especially as it was done in the full light of day, and in presence of a multitude of people, and was afterward canvassed in the highest court of the realm, composed of men who had every motive to cast doubt on it, had that been possible. It was a sign of the kingdom of heaven, a representation in the realm of the physical of what the work of the Church was to be in the realm of the Spirit. The pentecostal sign had shown what her equipment was to be, what the weapon by which she was to achieve her victories — the tongue of fire; this later sign was to show what her work would be, what the nature of the victories she was to win. To teach and to heal — these were the great functions of the Church. The tongue of fire was the symbol of the teaching power; this miracle was a symbol of the power to heal. The Church of Christ was to be no mere instructor of the world; she must be its physician, too; the Sun of Righteousness had risen, not with light only, but with healing in his wings.

That it was only a sign, not a specimen, is made clear first by the use the apostles made of it in the discourse which follows, and then by the fact that all through the subsequent history the stress is laid on forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life. Christ himself had made it clear that the works of healing which he wrought were but signs of a higher healing needed in the realm of the Spirit: "that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house."³ As these were the days of the Word made flesh, the giving of such signs was a characteristic feature of his ministry, and the prominence of the curing of bodily disease was kept up throughout his whole earthly life; but there is not the same prominence given to the healing of disease by the apostles. The Word made flesh has now become Spirit; and accordingly the ministry is lifted up to the plane of the Spiritual — not suddenly, that is not the method of the divine procedure, but by a natural evolution, the physical receding, the spiritual advancing. There is no breach of continuity either in the doing or in the teaching, though in both there is this development into the spiritual, which our Lord himself forecast in these remarkable and too-little heeded words of his: "greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to my Father." It is only in the early part of the history, the time of transition from one period to the other, that we find anything like the same stress laid on works of healing as throughout the Gospels.

There are those in our day who appeal to these cures of bodily disease as a reason why the Church of Christ should have little or nothing to say about sin and salvation, and give all its attention to relieving the sufferings of the poor, and the lame, and the halt, and the blind. This ought by all means to be done according to ability and opportunity, but never so as to

¹ Acts iii, 6 (Revised Version).

² Acts iii, 7, 8 (Revised Version).

³ Matthew ix, 6, 7 (Revised Version).

leave the other undone. The special work of Christ, the work to which above all he calls his Church, is to deal with the heart and conscience, to preach a salvation which not the poverty-stricken alone require, but all ranks and conditions of men. So the apostle, in the discourse which follows, addressed himself not to a class, but to the "men of Israel"; and, delivered as it was in the Temple at the hour of prayer and in a place of such resort as the porch of Solomon, the audience would include the *élite* of Jerusalem. To these men of Israel he preached not a Gospel for the cure of other people's bodies, but for the healing of their own souls, awakening their slumbering consciences by reminding them how they had treated the Christ of God, how they had denied the Holy and Righteous One and put to death the Prince of Life, and then summoning them to repent: "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." How spiritual it all is—not ankle-bones strengthened any longer, but sins forgiven and the presence of the Lord!

Such is the work of the Church under the dispensation of the Spirit—a work which cannot be accomplished without war. Had the alleviation of suffering been all she undertook to do, she might have had peace; but when she made it her great endeavor to summon men to repentance and new life, she must needs count upon her work becoming warfare. So in fact it proved; for while the apostles were trying to convince their audience that the true blessing of Israel, which according to the ancient covenant made with their fathers was to come to them first, and then through them to all the nations of the earth, was to be realized in the Spiritual sphere, "in turning away every one of you from your iniquities," they were rudely interrupted by a band of Temple officials, who came upon them, carried them off, and "put them in ward unto the morrow"—an ending of the day not fitted to raise their spirits, especially as they had no means of knowing, what afterward appeared, that "many of them that heard the Word believed," so that with the additions which had been made day by day since Pentecost, "the number of the men came to be about five thousand."

Had the apostles been the same men they were in the old days, this would probably have been the end of their witness. A night in prison, with the prospect of appearing next day before the dreaded court of the Sanhedrim, was not likely to have a bracing effect on one who, when his Master had been arraigned a few months before, had denied him in the most cowardly and shameful manner. But the old Simon and the new Peter are very different men. The old Simon has been crucified with Christ; nevertheless he lives, a new Peter, and yet not Peter, but Christ liveth in him. The Spirit of the Master now animates the servant; the effect of which is that it is not he who quails before his judges, but they who quail before him. As we read we realize that it is not Christ who has gone and Peter who is there; it is Peter who has gone, and Christ who is there. Well may he keep using that Name—it is no mere name, it is the very spirit of the man. The proof of the reality of the pentecostal advent is renewed in every paragraph. As the cure of the lame man reads like another chapter of the Gospel, the trial before the Sanhedrim reads like a new trial of the Christ. We are told that Peter, as he answered the question of the Sanhedrim, was filled with the Holy Ghost, but it really was not necessary to tell it; it shines out in every sentence of that wonderful address. It has such a rare combination of qualities as irresistibly to suggest that a greater than Peter is here, even he who gave the promise: "When they deliver you up be not anxious how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you."

Observe how dignified and respectful is the style of address as it opens, with only a delicate touch of irony in the reference to their being examined for the *good deed* done to the impotent man; the plainness and fullness of the answer given to the question, while the opportunity is not lost of giving the answer in such a way as to produce conviction of sin; the aptness of the

quotation¹ and the dexterity in seizing the opportunity of preaching the Gospel of salvation through the same Name in which the good deed to the impotent man has been done—think of all this accomplished, and accomplished so perfectly, within the compass of a brief answer to the council's question!²

The court itself had an instinctive feeling that a greater than Peter and John was somehow responsible for it; for "when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

Nonplussed and helpless, they rid themselves of the inconvenient presence of their prisoners and conferred among themselves: "What shall we do?" We are reminded of the question so many asked at the close of the pentecostal sermon; yet what a difference! Then it was, What shall we do to be saved? Now it is, What shall we do with these men? How shall we get rid of them, and their troublesome message? They cannot think of anything better than to charge their prisoners with threats that they speak henceforth to no man in this Name—which only gives occasion for another word of respectful but firm defiance, which has ever since rung like a clarion in the sacred cause of religious liberty: "Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." Before these unfaltering words, their accusers faltered, and, completely baffled, weakly repeated the same futile threat and let them go.

The record of the two eventful days closes with an exquisite glimpse of the apostles in their own company, a picture of the early Church in prayer. After the storm and stress of the day, it is light at evening time. The clouds have not dispersed, but they are broken, and the sun is tinging them with glory. We are permitted not only to look in upon the company but to listen, for the importance of the occasion is marked by a report of the principal prayer. It is the first recorded prayer of the Christian Church, and how wonderful it is! No infant lisplings are these, no rude beginnings of the language of devotion, to be developed in course of time to something truly high and noble. "Unlearned and ignorant men" are they? Strange how little it shows in what they say either to men or to God! Whether you regard its substance or its spirit or even its form, the prayer is a marvel. How lofty in its adoration, how penetrating in its use of Scripture, how calm in its trust, how utterly unselfish in its spirit, how definite in its requests, how confident in its outlook on the troubled future!³

We have spoken of this scene as a picture; it is more: it is an object-lesson for the Church on the secret of power for her work and warfare. Though the Spirit abides with the Church forever, it is only through prayer that his grace and power can be realized. The promise, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," had been gloriously fulfilled, as the events of the two days had abundantly proved; but the power, coming at first in answer to earnest united prayer, can abide with them only on the same condition; and accordingly, though beyond doubt they would recount the events of the day and make them the occasion of thanksgiving to God, it is not this which gives tone to the gathering. Forgetting the things which are behind, they are reaching forth to those which are before. Presuming not at all on the courage which has brought them forth triumphant from their first encounter with the enemy, they pray that in the coming time they may have strength to speak the Word with all boldness; and, without assuming that the work of cure which came so easy to them the day before would necessarily be repeated when the need should next arise, they plead that still the Lord will stretch forth his hands to heal. It is in this abiding spirit of prayerfulness that we read the secret of the early Church's power, both in her work and in her warfare.

¹ Acts iv, 11 (Revised Version).

² See whole address, Acts iv, 8-12 (Revised Version).

³ See Acts iv, 24-30.

CHAPTER IV.

HER MOST FORMIDABLE FOE.

SO far the Spirit has been all and in all. The divine element in the Church has for the time quite over-borne the human, so much so that, if we were reading the history for the first time, we might almost hope that the second body of Christ would be as pure as the first, that as he himself, though tempted in all points, was yet without sin, so might the Church in like manner prove immaculate. But it was not so to be. Human nature will be much in evidence in the Church's history; so we must not be disappointed to find that the innocence of the early days, like the innocence of childhood, is soon lost amid the rude ways of the world; that the first baptism of the Spirit is like the springtide of the spiritual life in many an ardent soul, carrying everything before it for a time, submerging old lusts, filling every creek and bay with its glorious fullness and so leading the new convert to entertain high hopes for the future, which must all too soon suffer abatement by sad experience in facing the stern realities of the battle of life.

One feels the change from "the former treatise," the discouraging difference between the life of Christ and the life of the Church. His path was "like the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day;" hers was to be through many a dark valley of the shadow and by many a long and tedious circuit. He could look the world in the face, with the defiant challenge: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" She must often hide her face in shame, with the humiliating confession: "Which of the commandments have I not broken?" But the Lord has never cast off his people. His promise was that the Spirit should abide with the Church forever, and it has been kept through all her wanderings. The "Holy Catholic Church" has never been altogether a misnomer, for even in the darkest hour the Spirit of holiness has not been absent from the remnant of his people. Holiness has always been the Church's ideal even when the actual was at the greatest distance from it, and in days when apostasy seemed well-nigh universal there have been at least the "seven thousand . . . which have not bowed unto Baal," and among them true saints of God shining like stars in the dark night.

The early records of the Church are happily true to life on the human as well as on the divine side. It is often painful enough to read the honest pages of the Acts and the Epistles, telling us how soon and with what dark success the serpent stole into the Church's paradise; how among those who were of one heart and one soul there sprang up noxious weeds of discontent and irritation, and that, too, in connection with the distribution of those very charity funds, the contribution of which had been the high-water mark of her early love and brotherhood; how differences of opinion and practice led to long and painful controversies; how the apostles themselves did not always agree and sometimes could not even work together, "the contention was so sharp between them;" how in the different churches there were factions here, false doctrines there, at times grave and serious abuses even in the holiest things, and not infrequently shameful relapses into the old heathen vices from which the converts had been redeemed.

All this is sad enough; and yet how reassuring to read of it in the canonical Scriptures! for if we had seen there only the ideal Church, we might have despaired of the actual Church as we traced its history down the ages and as we see it now. Had we been permitted to see in the inspired page only the heaven which lay about her in her infancy, we could not have recognized her in the stress of the conflict with "the gates of hell." It was in foresight of these terrible times that the Founder of the Church spoke the word which has given fresh courage to

the faithful when there was nothing else to cling to, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" but it helps us the more to stand in the evil day, and to possess our souls in patience and in hope, that we are permitted to see the same conflict with the terrible forces of evil become acute and anxious while yet the apostles were leading the army of the Lord.

But while we are encouraged not to despair, we are warned not to presume. That there will be tares among the wheat is a fact with which we must reckon, but we may not, therefore, think lightly of the enemy who sows them. "Offenses must needs come; but woe to that man through whom the offense cometh!" Familiar as sin is, and inevitable as is its presence in the Church in the time of her probation, it remains ever that abominable thing which God hates; and it is to impress this upon the conscience of the Church as with an iron pen and as with lead in the rock forever, that the first recorded sin, that of Ananias and Sapphira, is branded with a signal act of vengeance.¹

"The soul that sinneth it shall die" was written on the entrance of sin into the world; it is written again in letters of flame on the entrance of sin into the Church. This seems to be the true explanation of the altogether exceptional act of judgment. There have been many worse sinners in the Church than Ananias and Sapphira whom God has suffered not only to live but to flourish. We are not, therefore, to look for the reason of their punishment by instant death to the special aggravation of their sin. Aggravated it was as not only falsehood but sacrilege, seeing that it was committed as it were in the very face of the Holy Ghost, whose presence was so fully and graciously manifested in the very act and exercise in which the Church was engaged at the time. So the apostle puts it: "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? . . . Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

But even sacrilege in its worst forms has not been so uncommon in the history of the Church as to justify us in finding in this the reason of the exceptional judgment. We have, in fact, here one more sign of the kingdom of heaven. The healing of the lame man in Solomon's porch was, as we have seen, not for his sake only, but for the instruction of the Church to the end of time; and in the same way the judgment on Ananias and Sapphira was not for their punishment only, but for the warning of all who should come after.

Were, then, Ananias and Sapphira sacrificed to teach a lesson to other people? True, their sin deserved death, but was it fair to single them out for exceptional severity? Before we entertain such an objection we ought to be sure that they were treated with exceptional severity. When the would-be gambler loses all on his first stake it seems hard; but those who know what the gambling spirit means are well aware that it is the best thing that could have happened to him. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." This is so great a danger that the postponement of retribution is often the very worst thing that can happen to a man.

Perhaps the very severest word of doom in the whole Bible is this: "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." Had Ananias and Sapphira been let alone, they might have been joined to their idols, as Judas was, whom his Master let alone for so long a time, giving him repeated warning, indeed, but postponing the day of judgment. They had not had time, one may surely suppose, to be joined to their idols. They had committed a great sin, but they knew the way of forgiveness and of life, and though their summons was so sudden that they had no opportunity to show their penitence to men, we are not, on that account, shut up to the conclusion that the sentence of death extended to the life beyond. We may at least hope that in their case "mercy rejoiceth against judgment," that even in the swift retribution they were graciously dealt with, while the manner of it was such as to proclaim once for all, on the occasion of the first contact of the spirit of holiness with the spirit of iniquity, that "our God is a consuming fire."

¹ Acts v, 1-11.

CHAPTER V.

JERUSALEM FILLED WITH THE DOCTRINE.

HEALED of its deadly disease, the Church addressed itself to its work with new vigor, winning the confidence of the people more and more, till the whole of Jerusalem was filled with the doctrine,¹ so that the dominant party found itself compelled in self-defense to take renewed action; and as the former attempt to deal with the two leading spirits had so signally failed, they now seized all the apostles and put them in prison to await their trial before the Sanhedrim.

We can now see, as we look back, that not the apostles but their persecutors were on their trial. They have had already many signs that they are not fighting against men but against God, and their whole conduct, during the former trial and since, shows that they have serious misgivings. A struggle has been going on between the still small voice of conscience, and the loud clamor of worldly interest ever noisily reminding them that to yield now is to surrender position, prestige, influence over the people, every prerogative and privilege for the preservation of which they had already crucified the Christ. It is difficult for us now to understand how they could avoid what seems to us the inevitable inference from the cures wrought by the apostles; but we have only to remember that the current belief of the time left open to them the supposition that these may have been wrought by Satanic power, and that as yet there was no sufficient evidence that the whole movement was not of the Evil One. This would tend to quiet the uneasy conscience. We can see the reason, therefore, why it was desirable that they should not only see such evidence of the Spirit's power as was furnished by the good deed done to the impotent man, but have a demonstration of it which would come more closely home to themselves. Such a demonstration was their discovery that some Unseen Hand had opened the prison doors, foiled the vigilance of the guards, freed the apostles, and set them at their old task of preaching in the Temple "all the words of this Life." That it was a sign of warning to the Sanhedrim and of encouragement to the apostles, and not a mere rescue, is evident from the fact that the latter were as easily brought before the court as if they had been found safely locked up in the prison.

Now that they have them, what will they do with them? Their trepidation appears in the high priest's challenge: "We straightly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." The apostles, on the other hand, show the same boldness and unfaltering determination as before, and make answer with the same readiness and in a manner which again irresistibly suggests that it is not themselves, but the Spirit of their Father who speaketh in them: "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

While the accused are thus calm, and clear, and resolute, the accusers are distracted between conflicting emotions. Conscience, indeed, receives its quietus without much ado; but still their course is by no means clear. Listening to passion, "they were minded to slay them"; but, with all Jerusalem filled with the doctrine, what would the people do? They must find some safer course, and the suggestion of the prudent Pharisee, Gamaliel, seems to meet the case. In his remarkable speech² he makes the policy of non-intervention seem not only safe but even

¹ Acts v, 18.

² Acts v, 35-39.

pious, for he acknowledges the possibility that the movement they are trying to suppress may be of God; and if the controversy had been one with which they had nothing to do, the non-committal policy might have been justified; but as the question raised was one they were bound, both personally and officially, to face, selfish neutrality was mere cowardice. The different views on this point which are taken by good men may be accounted for by some confusion of ideas arising from the mixed functions of the Sanhedrim. Had it been a mere organ of the State, the counsel of Gamaliel would have been wholly wise; but as it was, above all, a spiritual court, and therefore bound to undertake responsibility in the matter, its time-serving timidity cannot be justified. In any case the argument of the astute Pharisee was valid against the use of the strong arm of the law; but it was no argument against the careful and conscientious consideration of the claims of this new doctrine with which Jerusalem was filled.

In these days of agnosticism, when it is reckoned a merit to keep the mind in suspense in regard to the great issues of life and death, time and eternity, there is too much temptation to admire and adopt the policy of Gamaliel; but surely all that is best and noblest in us rises up in indignation against the abnegation of manhood on the part of those who make their mere worldly interests the sole concern of life and are willing to "let alone" the great things of God and of eternal life to settle themselves as best they may.

Worldly wisdom was justified of her children from the selfish point of view and for the time, for the would-be persecutors managed to gratify to some extent all their conflicting emotions—their passion in the beating of the apostles, their regard for their own safety in the policy of masterly inactivity, and even their consciences in the convenient position of agnosticism, which seemed not only to excuse their neutrality but even to elevate it to the rank of a virtue. But heavenly wisdom is justified of her children in the end, aye, and even at the time, when all is known; for who would not rather share with the apostles in their beating than with the Sanhedrim in its satisfaction? These worthy fathers of Church and State went home, indeed, with a whole skin; but who will envy their feelings? The apostles returned to their company with bruised and bleeding backs, for "the forty stripes save one" was no light infliction; but who can fail to envy them, when we read "that they departed from the counsel rejoicing—rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name." It was not the pain of the beating so much as the shame of it they thought of; but even such shame they counted it an honor and a joy to suffer for him who had suffered all for them.

The renewed attempt to stop the movement has again given it a fresh impulse; and every day, in the Temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ. Thus the Gospel triumphed in the capital.

CHAPTER VI.

“IN ALL JUDEA AND SAMARIA.”

THE extension of the work from the capital to the provinces was not the result of any deliberate plan. So far as we can see, the apostles had no immediate intention either of going forth themselves, or sending out a mission. It may be that they were so fully occupied with the work which lay closest to their hands that they forgot how wide was their commission. In this they were not without excuse; for though, as we have seen, Jerusalem was in a certain sense filled with the doctrine, it was as yet far from being thoroughly evangelized; and we can well believe that the duties entailed by their rapid successes would be so exacting that it might seem as if no one could be spared.

But God did not allow them to tarry very long. As the rich harvest fields without did not allure the reapers, the Lord of the harvest thrust the laborers forth. In the portion of the history now before us we shall see, first, the train of events in which Stephen was chief actor and sufferer, which led to the scattering of the disciples over the country, then the conspicuous success which attended the preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom as illustrated in the work of Philip, after which attention is concentrated on the notable convert who was subsequently to figure so largely in the history as the Apostle to the Gentiles, while meantime the way is prepared for the great work in which he is to be the leader by the breaking down of the middle wall of partition between the Jew and the Gentile. This will give us as principal subjects: the Martyr, the Evangelist, the New Apostle, the breaking down of the old wall, with a parting glimpse of the Jerusalem Church before the interest of the story is transferred to the new center at Antioch. The Church, like the Christian, when in the path of duty, finds all things work together for good. This will be a chapter of troubles; but each one of them proves a blessing in disguise, and works in the end for the furtherance of the Gospel.

First, there is the dispute between the Hebrews and the Hellenists, or Grecian Jews. We can readily see how it would arise. Though many foreign Jews were present at the first proclamation of the Gospel, most of them would at the close of the feast return to the countries whence they came; so it is probable that the Church in Jerusalem would at first consist almost exclusively of Palestinian Jews. But among the resident population there was a considerable number of the Jews of the Dispersion who had returned to Jerusalem to live, and as the work extended throughout the city many of these were added to the Church and known as Hellenists, or Grecian Jews. Meantime responsibilities had accumulated so fast on the apostles, who seem up to this time to have been the sole officers of the Church, that it was exceedingly likely that the newest comers might have some reason to complain that “their widows were neglected in the daily ministration” of the alms of the Church.

It must have been very distressing to the apostles to hear the complaint; but they met it in the right spirit, and it led to very good results. It taught them not to attempt too much themselves, and set them on the right way of drawing out and developing the gifts of the people. They at once called a general meeting, acknowledged that, occupied so fully as they must needs be with prayer and teaching, they could not do justice to matters of finance, and recommended the appointment of a committee of seven to be intrusted with this department of service.

This accordingly was done. From the interesting account of the proceedings it is clear that the Church had no ready-made constitution, but was left to organize itself as occasion required, always, of course, under the guidance of the Spirit. At the same time we see how

under that direction certain great principles were followed which are "writ large" for the future guidance of the Church in the book of the Acts or "Way of Acting of the Apostles," as it is in one important manuscript which gives the first word of the title in the singular number instead of the plural.

In their way of acting here we recognize such important principles as these: the high qualifications¹ required even of those who are appointed to serve tables; the right of the people to choose their own officers; and the propriety of solemnly ordaining the officers thus elected by prayer and the laying on of hands, to indicate that not on themselves must they depend but on the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them. We may infer from the names that the Hellenists had a majority on the committee, which would make it clear that there was no desire to keep them in the background. The whole matter having been settled so promptly and wisely, we are prepared to learn that there was no hindrance to the work, that, on the contrary, "the word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." For the new officers did not confine themselves to the serving of tables. Men full of the Holy Ghost and of power could not so limit their activity. Probably modesty had kept them silent hitherto; but now that the responsibilities of office were upon them, they began to take part, and that effectively, in the aggressive work of the Church. This was especially true of one of them, Stephen, who, himself in all probability a Hellenist, made no small stir among his old associates.

Some of their synagogues took up the gauntlet which Stephen had thrown down, and tried to convince him with their arguments. But "they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake." Dr. William Cleaver Wilkinson, in his "Epic of Saul," after a powerful description of one of these contests, puts it thus:

"A mien of something more than majesty
In Stephen as he spoke, transfiguring him;
Conscious authority loftier than pride;
Deep calm which made intensity seem weak;
Slow weight more insupportable than speed;
Passion so pure that its effect was peace,
Beatifying his face; betokened power
Beneath him that supported him, behind
Him that impelled, above him and within
That steadied him immovable, supplied
As from a fountain of omnipotence;
An air breathed round him of prophetic rapt
Solemnity oppressive beyond words
And dread communication from the Throne."

But the Jews were in no mood to yield: unable to withstand the Spirit by which Stephen spake, they appealed to the strong arm of the law, and, securing his arrest, brought him before the council on a charge of speaking blasphemous words against Moses and against God.

The poet is certainly right in supposing that there was something singularly impressive in the appearance and bearing of Stephen. He was probably a man of fine physique, and when he was confronted with his accusers there was such a light in his face that it could not but be noticed, and was so well remembered that its reflection still remains in the mirror of the word: "all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." It was the glory of Christ in his heart shining out through his countenance, a replica in miniature of his Master's transfiguration.

We need not wonder then that his speech² should prove less a personal defense than a testimony to the Spirit of God as working through his chosen from the earliest times, and

¹ Acts vi, 3.

² Acts vii, 2-53.

meeting at every stage with just such resistance as his accusers were making now. Inasmuch as use is frequently made of this speech to impugn the history in which it is imbedded, it may be worth while to mention that Zeller, who is perhaps the most thorough-going of the Tübingen School, speaks of it as "not only characteristic, but also better suited to the case and to the accusation raised against him, than is usually supposed."¹ If so pronounced a rationalist can speak of it in this way, we need not be too much disturbed by the suggestion sometimes made that it is so irrelevant, and even inaccurate, that it cannot have been spoken by Stephen, but must have been put into his mouth by the historian — an argument, indeed, which might rather be reversed, for Stephen spoke on the impulse of the moment, while the historian could work at leisure, and was, therefore, far less liable to fall into irrelevance and inaccuracy.

As before with the apostles, so now the accused becomes accuser, the defense passes into an indictment delivered with such stinging force that "they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth;" and, breaking up in disorder, their excitement so inflamed the people gathered within the precincts of the court, that, all restraint at an end, the multitude became a mob, and, hustling him on till they passed the city gates, they took the law into their own hands and stoned him to death.

It was rather a popular tumult than an execution, else it would have been necessary, as in the case of the Lord himself, to ask the sanction of the Roman government, unless indeed, as is not unlikely, the event took place between the recall of Pontius Pilate and the arrival of his successor, when such regulations might be more or less in abeyance. But though there had been no formal sentence, and no attempt at the semblance of public justice in the way in which the martyr was hurried to the place of execution, yet when they reached the spot, the forms of Jewish law concerning death by stoning were to some extent carried out, as is evident from the reference to "the witnesses," whose duty it was to cast the first and second stones, and who were able so deliberately to address themselves to their grim task that they had time to take off their outer garments and give them in keeping of a young man whose name was Saul.

What was in this young man's mind, we well may wonder, as he looked on Stephen's face, with even more of the celestial light upon it than when he stood before the council, for the heavens had opened to him, and he saw the Christ. What must Saul have thought when that which so impressed Dante in vision was enacted full in his sight:

"And I beheld him on his knees low bowed,
To earth bent down as heavy death drew near;
But evermore his eyes as heaven's gates show'd,
And in that strife to heaven's high Lord his prayer
He pour'd, that he his fierce foes would forgive
With such a look as unlocks pity's door."²

His murderers had to stop their ears when he spoke to them of the open heaven, and we may well suppose that young Saul would be fain to shade his eyes when he looked upon the martyr's face.

The death of Stephen was in one respect worlds away from that of his Master: for he had no sins of others to bear, and his own had been all forgiven, so there was no sense of forsakenness, rather was God nearer than ever; but in all else how like! — not only the same patient endurance of injury and loving prayer for his tormentors, but the same upward trustful look in committing his soul to his Lord. Both in the prayer and in the committal he addresses himself to Christ, showing that he knew him as the only way to the Father. It is, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;" and again, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Having said this, "he fell asleep." We have been so long accustomed to this beautiful

¹ "Contents and Origin of the Acts of the Apostles Critically Investigated," I, p. 241.

² Dean Plumptre's translation of "Purgatory," XV, pp. 109-114.

euphemism for death that some may fail to see how exquisitely lovely is its setting here. "The peace that passeth all understanding" is in it.

If young Saul was impressed, it was only for the moment, for immediately after we find him heading the fierce persecution which ensued. Or may it be that the very fury he showed was due to the goading of his conscience? In his speech before King Agrippa long afterward he thus speaks of his conduct at this time: "I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities." What made him so exceedingly mad? Was he already kicking against the pricks?

It must have been a time of sore dismay; for so hot was the persecution that many had to flee. The apostles, indeed, maintained their ground. Past experience possibly did not encourage the authorities to make any further attempt on them; possibly, too, the persecution was directed more especially against the Hellenists, one of whom had given the provocation. Be that as it may, the apostles held to their posts; but it must have been with no little misgiving that they saw so many of their best men compelled to flee for their lives. Yet this, too, worked good in the end, for it came to pass that there were many witnesses to the Lord, not now in Jerusalem only, but in Judea and in all Samaria, for "they went everywhere preaching the Word."

CHAPTER VII.

THE EVANGELIST.

FOLLOWING his usual method, our historian makes no attempt to give a full account of the movement in the provinces, but singles out a particular instance, and gives it in somewhat full detail. Of the evangelists at work in all directions the one chosen is Philip, one of the seven. The position of his name on that committee, standing next to that of Stephen, probably indicates that in natural gifts he stood second only to the great man who had just sealed his testimony with his blood. But the main reason for the selection is likely to have been the opportunity enjoyed by Saint Luke of hearing all about it from the evangelist himself.¹

The City of Samaria, known to the Romans as Sebaste, the capital of the province of Samaria, was a place of considerable importance, and of no little magnificence since its rebuilding by Herod the Great. Orthodox Jews held the Samaritan people in great contempt. Saint John tells us that "the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans"; but even this gives us but a faint idea of the force of the antipathy. It is written in the Talmud: "He who takes the bread of a Samaritan is like him who eats the flesh of swine. No Israelite may receive a Samaritan as a proselyte; this accursed people shall have no part in the resurrection of the dead." This quotation, however, evidently represents the extreme view; for it was a moot point among the Rabbis whether they should be regarded as Gentiles or placed on the level of ignorant and misguided Jews. They were more than half heathen by race, as is clear from the account of the settlement of Samaria after the deportation of the ten tribes;² but they received the Pentateuch as of divine authority, and they looked for the coming of the Messiah. So far as faith was concerned, therefore, they had more in common with the Jew than with the Gentile, and on the whole were reckoned among the chosen people in theory at least, though in practice they were treated with far more indignity and scorn than any of the Gentile nations.

¹ See Acts xxi, 8.

² II. Kings xvii, 24, *et seq.*

It is evident that our Lord took the liberal view; for though he considered his personal mission to be to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," he not only did not exclude the Samaritans but had peculiar satisfaction in his ministry among them. The knowledge of this would prepare the minds of the disciples for recognizing the claims of Samaria; and, if any doubt remained, the express mention of that province in the commission he gave them made it imperative that the despised people should not be passed by. Yet it must have required no little exercise of the charity characteristic of the Gospel of Christ to induce even a Hellenist Jew, as Philip probably was, to make the City of Samaria the field of his evangelistic labors.

Like his Lord at Sychar ten years before, he found the fields white unto the harvest; and, putting in his sickle, gathered many golden sheaves. But "it is not all gold that glitters," and the evangelist had to suffer a signal disappointment in the case of his most notable convert. It is a sign of the frankness and scrupulous veracity of the historian that the worst case should be precisely the one he singles out for special detail.

From all we know of the City of Samaria it would be a fair field for the operations of such an adventurer as Simon Magus, a man possessed in a special degree of those powers which are exercised on the border land of the material and spiritual, and which present so much reality on the one hand and mystery on the other as to suggest grave problems to serious thinkers, and afford to designing persons only too good opportunities for trading on the superstitions of the unthinking multitude. This man, by the practice of his occult art, had given himself out to be "the great power of God"; and in default of anything better to meet their spiritual cravings, his pretensions had gained the acceptance of almost the entire population. But when Philip came, accredited not by mere marvels which filled them with amazement, but by genuine works of healing the sight of which inspired them with new hope, they recognized "the great power of God" of which they were in search as being with him, and joined themselves to him in such numbers that Simon the magician found it necessary seriously to consider the whole position. The result was that he "believed also." He was convinced probably by what he saw Philip do rather than by what he heard him say, that his power, whatever it might be, was greater than his own; but, as the sequel showed, he had none of that sense of personal need and genuine faith in Christ which mark the beginnings of new life.

That not righteousness but power was what he sought—more of the same power with which he was already familiar—is made evident by his eager application to the two apostles who had come to see and sanction the new movement, to sell him the secret of the occult influence which he saw attended the laying on of their hands. The noble answer of Saint Peter, with its lofty indignation at the mercenary motive of the man on the one hand, and on the other its kind consideration for the man himself, combining as it does the sternest faithfulness with the most tender solicitude, is still another token of the indwelling in him of the Spirit of his Master: "Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." What a condemnation is here not only of the ecclesiastical offense of simony, and of all that traffic in holy things which has been associated with the magician's name, but of the too common superstition of expecting spiritual results to follow so-called apostolic acts, apart altogether from the state of mind and heart of him for whose supposed benefit they are performed.

Later Christian literature has much to say of the subsequent career of Simon Magus. Much of it is doubtful; but enough is well established to make it only too certain that he did not lay to heart the apostle's warning, but went to greater lengths in daring impiety thereafter than before. It is an awful thing to be near the kingdom of God, and yet refuse to enter.

It may be worth while to note, in dismissing the sorcerer from our view, that, while the stories concerning him in the early Fathers were largely made use of by the Tübingen School in framing the theory by which they sought to discredit the Book of Acts, not only was the attempt a failure, as is shown in Professor Harnack's article on Simon Magus in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," but these very stories on which they relied have proved of value in confirming the authenticity and antiquity of our history, inasmuch as it contains no trace of them, as would almost certainly have been the case if they had been published before it was written—one more instance of the impugners of Scripture being "hoist with their own petard."

But we must not allow the painful interest of this disappointing case to hinder our recognition of the great and good work done by Philip in Samaria. The general statement "there was much joy in that city"¹ means a great deal; and it is evident that the two apostles who had come from Jerusalem were not hindered by their experience with the great magician from finding satisfaction in what they had witnessed, so much so that before they returned they continued the work on their own account, preaching the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.² We may reckon then that it was no small trial to the evangelist to be obliged, in obedience to directions which he could not refuse to follow,³ to leave the busy scene of his successful labors and go south to a desert place, where there seemed nothing to do. What could be the reason of so strange a providence?

Was it needful for him, after all the distractions of the city and its work, to have some time for quiet converse with God? Was it the same voice which said to the tired disciples, "Come ye apart into a desert place and rest awhile?" Undoubtedly it was; and it is well for us, when changes come into our life which make a wilderness about us, to recognize the voice, and realize the love which thrills in it.

But it was a mistake to suppose that even in the desert there will be nothing to do. For what is this *cortège* which sweeps up toward him along the road from Jerusalem? As it draws near he sees it is the retinue of some man of rank sitting in his chariot with an open scroll before him, from which he seems to be reading. With interest he waits till the company is close upon him, and as soon as the nobleman, for such he must be, comes within hearing, he knows what the scroll is, for according to the frequent custom in these days the man in the chariot is reading aloud in a kind of chant. Prompted by the Spirit and invited by the man, Philip joins him, and soon discovers who he is and what he seeks.

He is a man in high authority at the court of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, "over all her treasure," and therefore presumably not only of high rank but of great wealth and large influence. But these things had not satisfied him; nor had the religion of Ethiopia fed the hunger of his soul. From those of the Dispersion who had found their way as far south as Meroe he would hear of the Jews' religion, and of their Sacred Scriptures, a copy of which, in the Septuagint translation, he had procured. This he would carefully study, but not finding even there what he craved, he undertook the long journey to the Jewish capital to worship the God of the Hebrews and seek for further light. We can imagine the disappointment he would have in listening to the dry prelections of the Rabbis, and how sore his heart would be as he turned sorrowfully home again. But the Scriptures, even to his dim comprehension, have more of light than these; so, still continuing his quest, he keeps the scroll open before him, and broods over the words of sacred prophecy which seem to promise much, though he can make of them but little. As he meets the stranger he is busy with the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and the passage he has reached is this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before his shearer is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." A nameless pathos in it touches him; but what can it mean?

¹ Acts viii, 8 (Revised Version).

² Acts viii, 25.

³ Acts viii, 26.

What a notable example of earnestness, diligence, and perseverance in seeking after God! Here is a man who knows what asking, seeking, knocking mean. And presently he will see as clearly the meaning of receiving, finding, entering the open gate of the kingdom.

His perplexity has prepared him for the stranger's question, not necessarily proposed in the brief and blunt-like words into which it is condensed in the report of it, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" Such a question, with whatever polite preface prefixed, might well have given offense, especially as coming from a pedestrian with no appearance of rank or station corresponding to his own; but the man is so thoroughly in earnest that he never thinks of this, but, with readiness to welcome light from any quarter, however obscure, invites the stranger into his chariot and eagerly listens to him, and as he listens finds what he so long has sought. For Philip takes the very passage which is perplexing him, and tells him all about it, tells him that the prophet is not speaking of himself, but of another, even of the Son of God, who had come from heaven to save men from their sins, and had offered up himself as a sacrifice upon the cross, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Thus "he preached unto him Jesus"—not doctrines, not duties, not rites and ceremonies, but Jesus, with the result that he believes, eagerly asks and gladly accepts Christian baptism, and, though he loses his instructor before he has had time to realize it all, he goes on his way rejoicing.

The circle is widening: from the Hebrew to the Hellenist, from the Hellenist to the Samaritan, from the Samaritan to the proselyte of the gate from far off Meroe, in whom Ethiopia stretches out her hand to God.

While we have no further details of the evangelistic work of those who were scattered abroad by the persecution, there are general notices of great interest which show that the "Judea and Samaria" of the commission were taken by the disciples in a large sense, as including Jews and even proselytes far beyond the limits of the Holy Land. We shall presently find, as we follow the story of Saul's conversion, that there were disciples in Damascus, nearly a week's journey from Jerusalem; and when, later on, attention is called to the new departure in the Church at Antioch, and we naturally ask "How comes it that there are believers in a heathen city so very far away?" the answer is: "They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews." This last clause makes it evident that up to this time there has been no thought of a strictly foreign mission. In Damascus, in Antioch, in Cyprus, it was still to Jews only that the Gospel was preached—first to the Jew proper, then to the Grecian Jew, and, as in the case of the Ethiopian, to the Jewish proselyte. If any thought of "the uttermost parts of the earth" were in their minds, it must have been with the idea of following up their brethren of the chosen nation into all the lands where they were scattered, and, besides, gathering in as many proselytes as they may be able to persuade to add belief in Christ to their faith in Moses and the prophets. It had not yet dawned on the mind of the Church that to the Gentiles should be preached the unsearchable riches of Christ. But the hour is at hand and the man, as we shall see in the chapters which follow.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NEW APOSTLE.

WHEN Saul of Tarsus first received his commission from the chief priests, he no doubt expected, in the eagerness of his youthful ardor, to be able to stamp out at once the new heresy which, after having apparently had its deathblow in the crucifixion of its Christ, had in some unaccountable way burst out afresh in Jerusalem. But when he saw that the scattered embers only kindled new fires, he found it necessary to address himself to a larger work than he had at first anticipated. He must follow these wandering evangelists to Samaria, to Cæsarea, to Tiberias. Must he go still farther? It would appear so; for what is this news he hears from Damascus? There is one Ananias there making a commotion in the synagogues, of exactly the same kind as Stephen made in the synagogues of Jerusalem. He must go and put a stop to that; for Damascus is a most important city.

It may be much more difficult to secure convictions in the foreign city; but the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem has jurisdiction over the Damascus Jews; so the arch-inquisitor provides himself with the necessary letters to secure the extradition of the offenders, and sets off on the long, slow journey, occupying nearly a week, the last two days of which would be spent in traveling the stony desert which flanks the base of the snowy Hermon. What his thoughts might have been as he passed through these northern solitudes where there were no Nazarenes to persecute, we can only conjecture. True, he was acting in all good conscience. "I verily thought within myself," he said long afterward to King Agrippa, "that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." But other thoughts are beginning to intrude. There is still the loud voice of his burning zeal for the faith of his fathers, and of his righteous indignation against those who would set aside the law, and so blight forever the hope of Israel; but there is also a "still small voice" which whispers in the name of pity, and even suggests the doubt whether these men and women, with such calm on their faces and such noble words on their lips, can really deserve imprisonment and death. And then, that look of Stephen, and that prayer of his—how they come back!

After all, there is a wonderful difference between this man and the party of which he is the representative. It has been made an objection to the credibility of the history that a man brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, should pursue a policy so different from that advocated by his master in the Sanhedrim. But these critics only show their ignorance of human nature, and their inability to recognize the force of conscience on the one hand and of self-interest on the other. It was Gamaliel, indeed, who had been mainly instrumental in impressing his pupil with that reverence and enthusiasm for the law for which he himself had been so distinguished, and, so long as there was no danger to be incurred, master and pupil would be wholly at one. But as soon as the motive of fear comes into play, the opportunist betrays himself and retires to the background, while the man of conscience springs to the front. Gamaliel no doubt deplored that the hand of his party had been forced by the popular fury which was enkindled by the oratory of Stephen; and, while he could no longer suggest that things be "let alone," he would naturally keep in the background himself till he should see "whereunto this would grow." But Saul of Tarsus was a man of very different mold. His ambitions were not personal. His zeal was in the main a genuine zeal for the Lord; and for this very reason he was, at his worst, in a much more hopeful position in relation to the kingdom of God than any haughty Sadducee or time-serving Pharisee who might from motives of prudence be rather disposed to moderate his zeal.

It is important to bear this in mind in endeavoring to understand the conversion of Saul. We are in danger of making the same mistake about him which was long made about Bunyan by exaggerating the force of self-condemnatory references to past guilt. Why do men like these call themselves "the chief of sinners?" Because, having learned to regard all sin with unutterable horror, and accustomed as they are to be charitable to others and severe on themselves, they are phenomenally impressed with the heinousness of their own sin, both because it is their own, and also because it is "naked and open" to their sight as no other sin can be; but to take their own estimate of themselves so conveyed and make it ours of them, is to show a lack of discrimination fatal to just conclusions.

Wherein, then, lay the sin of Saul? There seems to have been no moral obliquity. It is true that in his letter to the Romans he acknowledges his condemnation by the law, instancing the tenth commandment as the one the remembrance of which had brought him conviction of sin; but even at the worst he struggled and cried out, so that his sensitiveness on this point only confirms the general impression of his moral integrity. What was wrong, then? Was there anything worse than an error of judgment; and, if so, was it not correction rather than conversion that he needed?

Now, it cannot be denied that he was wrong-headed more than wrong-hearted. But what kept him wrong-headed so long? It was pride, willfulness, self-assertion. Had he been a humble seeker after truth he would have found it long ere then. He would have listened in a different spirit to the arguments in the synagogue of the Cilicians,¹ and would have paid more attention to those scriptures which speak of the Messiah as a sufferer. He would have seen the Christ-light in Stephen's face, and heard the divine tone in his prayer for his tormentors. Thoughts born of these experiences were pricking him, and he was proudly repelling them and trying to banish them from his mind; instead of yielding to their softening influences he was getting more and more excited and furious, like the ox kicking against the goad. The sin of Saul, then, lay especially in his shutting his eyes to the light of heaven and closing his ears to the voice of God.

If we have been at all correct in estimating the character of this man and the state of his mind, how strikingly natural was all that happened to him as he neared Damascus! He has refused to yield to the gentle pressure of the divine love; pride still rules his will. He is beginning to be haunted with the uneasy feeling that somehow or other he will be balked in his design and miss his prey, but this makes him only the more eager to be at his cruel work. Why else should he be hurrying on in the noonday heat, instead of giving his company the accustomed rest and himself time for calm and earnest thought? If he is to be won, it must be by some means that will overpower his self-will and break down the pride of his heart. And so, instead of the gentle glow of heaven as he had seen it on Stephen's face, there is now a blinding light, above the brightness of the sun, which smites him to the earth; instead of the prayers and entreaties of his poor victims, there is a solemn voice from the Great Victim of his cruel rage, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" The voice has in it a tone of authority which commands his conscience, and of tender pleading which touches his heart; so he stammers out, "Who art thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

So Jesus is risen as he said, and as his disciples say! He is not in the grave beside the Damascus road, where I passed a week ago with the thought in my mind, "What poor deluded people these must be to imagine that man to be living yet!" I have been all wrong; and they have been right. He is in very deed Lord and Christ.

His pride is humbled in the dust; self-will is gone; the strong man is brought low, and from the heart as of a little child there comes the cry, "Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do?" The marvelous change is impressively described by Dr. Stalker: "Instead of the proud

¹ Acts vi, 9.

Pharisee riding through the streets with the pomp of an inquisitor, a stricken man, trembling, groping, clinging to the hand of his guide, arrives at the house of entertainment amid the consternation of those who receive him, and, getting hastily to a room where he can ask them to leave him alone, sinks down there in the darkness."¹ And there he waits until the very man whom he was seeking to kill, sent by this same Jesus, comes to comfort him and heal him; to receive him as a penitent, and baptise him into the Name he had hitherto hated and despised. What a fall was there! but he felt that he might be raised again, as shown in the condensed account he gave long after to King Agrippa of the Lord's dealing with him on that eventful day. "Arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me."² Dead unto sin, he had become alive unto God, and ready for highest service in his kingdom.

"I held it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things."

There is no event in all history better authenticated than the sudden and marvelous conversion of Saul of Tarsus. We have three accounts of it in the Acts of the Apostles³ with just such variations in detail as confirm the main facts, and in the epistles there are frequent references which give additional attestation, while, as has been shown by Sabatier and many recent writers (for the Pauline literature has been very large of late) the whole of his theology is built upon it, and is really an explanation and development of the great truths of which it was the concrete expression.

No attempt is now made by the leading rationalists of the day to dispute the reality of the experience, and some even of those who make it the fundamental principle of their criticism to deny the miraculous are constrained to admit something of miracle here. Weizsäcker, for example, says: "Conversion is in this sense a miracle, the genuine and only miracle that belongs to the faith, which in itself is the experience in an immediate form, and from that fact derives the certainty that the experience has a divine origin."⁴ So too Professor Pfleiderer writes: "Undoubtedly it was a 'Revelation' which here fell to the lot of Paul; not, indeed, a revelation of sensuous realities of a super-terrestrial kind, but a revelation of the Spirit of the Son of God."⁵

It is no longer, therefore, necessary to argue the reality of Saul's conversion or of the divine revelation which was its cause; what the rationalists still deny, as is seen in the quotation from Pfleiderer above, is that there was any sensuous reality of the super-terrestrial kind, *i. e.*, that the apostle actually saw with his bodily eyes the risen Christ. It is the resurrection of the body which is still contested; and great stress is laid on the fact that Paul was of an ardent temperament, apt to have visions and revelations, and even to be "caught up to the third heaven"—all which is true; but our friends fail to set against this, that the apostle always sharply distinguishes this experience from all these. He was of an ardent temperament, but his logical faculty was never in abeyance. Even of that occasion of ecstasy to which special reference is made, he speaks with perfect sanity and soberness. He built nothing whatever on that experience, and, in fact, felt bound to be silent about it to his fellow-men as a matter between himself and God. But with his experience on the day of his conversion it was entirely

¹ "Life of Saint Paul."

² Acts xxvi, 16-18 (Revised Version).

³ Acts ix, xxii, xxvi.

⁴ "Apostolic Age," p. 80.

⁵ "Philosophy and Development of Religion," Vol. II, p. 153.

different. Not only did he tell it, but he virtually gave his life to the telling of it; and that not as a mere spiritual experience, but as one proof more added to the many he had examined and found valid which had been already furnished of the reality of the resurrection—the bodily resurrection—of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹ Moreover he grounds his apostleship on it: “Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?”² Any disciple in any age may have a spiritual vision of Christ,³ but an apostle must be a “witness to the resurrection,” and this and nothing less was the privilege Saint Paul enjoyed at the turning point of his life.

Still further, it is clear that the ardor of Saul’s temperament was carrying him in precisely the opposite direction from that in which such visions and revelations might be expected. One might as soon expect him to have the vision of a risen Gamaliel afterward as of a risen Christ now, unless there was a real appearance and a veritable voice from heaven.

Of the minor points in the discussion our space will not allow us to treat. But it may be well to give one as a specimen. It has been often remarked that while Jesus drew his illustrations largely from rural scenes, Saint Paul, who, in his restless eagerness, seems to have missed “the harvest of a quiet eye,” would borrow his metaphors from the objects which were familiar to the throngs of busy men. Now, suppose for a moment that Renan is right when he says, “The Christ who personally reveals himself to him is his own ghost; he listens to himself, thinking that he hears Jesus,” can we think it possible that the utterance would have taken this form: “It is hard for thee to kick against the goad”? How unlike the man of Tarsus, how characteristic of the Man of Nazareth! Still more remarkable, perhaps, in the same connection is the form of the question, “Why persecutest thou *me*?” as coming from him who said, “Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.”

It may be well, also, to say just a word on the most considerable variation in the accounts. In the apostle’s speech before King Agrippa nothing is said about the three days’ blindness, the visit of Ananias, and the receiving of the commission through him, so that, if we had only that one account, the impression would be left that the commission to bear the name of Christ to the Gentiles was given on the spot, whereas we are told it was given in Damascus, three days later, by the mouth of Ananias. But, though the statement made to King Agrippa is incomplete, there is not a word of it untrue. The Lord did give him the commission, and that was all it was necessary for him then to mention; so he leaves out the part Ananias had in it; but in his other speech before the council,⁴ he goes into full detail, and in doing so corroborates the minute accuracy of the historian.

The conduct of Ananias is exceedingly touching and impressive. He has heard of the wolf coming, and now he is asked not only to acknowledge him as a sheep, but to appoint him a shepherd in chief. No wonder the good man pleads, “Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name.” But the Lord said unto him, “Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel.” “And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.”

“He is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles.” The new wine needed a new wine skin. It was necessary, as we shall see, that the mind of Saint Peter should be prepared for the new departure; but it would have been cruel to have made him the leader of it. The peculiar fitness of the new apostle for the new work, by his parentage, the place of his birth, his education, his character, his temperament, his talents, is so familiar that we may not in our brief space enlarge on it. Never did chosen vessel more fully justify the choice.

¹ See I. Corinthians xv.

² I. Corinthians ix, 1.

³ John xiv, 21.

⁴ Acts xxii.

CHAPTER IX.

THE OLD WALL BROKEN DOWN.

“THE middle wall of partition” had served a good purpose. It was necessary that Israel should be separated from the nations—a garden inclosed, a nursery fenced in—until the time when the plant of righteousness should become a tree, strong enough to stand the exposure of the open field. The fruits of righteousness are now ripe, and the leaves all opened out for the healing of the nations. While the fruit was unripe, a wall was needed to keep intruders out for their own sake, as well as to preserve the tender growth. But now “the fullness of the time” has come, “all things are ready”; and the fence must be taken down.

It was a hard thing. The wall had stood there for so many centuries. Would not its demolition be an undoing of the good work of God continued through all these ages in his mercy and faithfulness to his chosen people? No wonder the very thought of it was gall to the Hebrew soul, and bitterest of all to those who were most devout of heart. Besides, had it not gates, gates opening inward easily? Who more welcome than a proselyte? And even for those who did not see their way to submit to all the rigor of the law, there was still a welcome to take the position of “proselytes of the gate,” so that, while still remaining of the Gentiles, they might enjoy some sight of the beauty and some waft of the fragrance of the garden of the Lord.

We can well understand, then, that the apostles and early Christians whom we have seen worshiping in the Temple, and observing all the ordinances of the law, if the thought were ever suggested of carrying their new Gospel to the Gentiles, would be inclined to say; “Yes, they may have it, if they will only come within our sacred inclosure, or at the very least stand close to the gate.” But now these conditions are all to be done away with. The Gospel is to be offered to all without exception and without distinction, no other condition asked but faith, which is simply willingness to receive it. The Jew is to have no substantial advantage over the Gentile. He gets the offer first, that is all; the rest, however far off, are to be made as thoroughly welcome as if they had come all the way to Jerusalem to submit themselves to the commandments and ordinances of the law. That is revolution. It means the utter demolition of the old wall.

How is this revolution to be effected without shattering the Jewish Church? A man has actually been chosen to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles; but how is the Church in Jerusalem, especially the mother church of the scattered bands throughout Judea and Samaria, with its twelve apostles taught by the Master himself to think of themselves as in some sense representing the twelve tribes of Israel,¹ to be brought to sanction the new departure, to say nothing of promoting it?

The question was a very important one, as is made evident not only in our book of history, but in all the Christian literature of the period within our purview. It is difficult for us now to realize what a herculean work it was to emancipate the Church from the wrappings of Judaism, which however useful, and even necessary to its existence, in the days of its infancy, would have arrested its development, and caused it to be not only small and weak but distorted, like a Chinese lady’s foot. But Saint Luke, living as he did in the midst of the agitations which followed the new departure, familiar with the long controversy to which it gave rise, and which taxed to the utmost the talents and resources of the great apostle, felt that it was the question of the day; and, accordingly, he tells the story of the revolution with great fullness of

¹ Matthew xix, 28.

detail and with the utmost care. He gives even more space to it than to the conversion of Saul, and uses the same reiteration, for again we have three accounts, first the historical statement,¹ then the speech of Saint Peter defending his action before the brethren in Jerusalem,² and, later on, a brief statement by the same apostle before the assembly convened to deal with the appeal from Antioch.³

As so often happens in the divine providence when great movements are inaugurated, the way is prepared at different points far apart. When the times are ripe for some fresh discovery it will present itself to the mind of different observers or thinkers quite independently, so that perhaps it is difficult afterward to tell which has the prior claim to the credit of it. So here we shall find that both at its center and in the outskirts the Church was providentially prepared for the new departure—at its center by the novel and strange experience of the chief of the apostles, in the course of which he was led first to see for himself, and then to bring convincingly before the mind of the Church that it was the Lord's will that the Gentiles should be received; and at the circumference by the progress of the work of evangelization, extending itself so far beyond the bounds of the Holy Land as to enlist the services of men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, taking it for granted that what was good for the Jew must be good for the Gentile also, and, without any authorization beyond the instinct of their own loving hearts, preached the Gospel to the Greeks at Antioch,⁴ and that with such wonderful success that the attention of the whole Church was directed to it.

In the process of transition the feelings of "the apostle of the circumcision" were very tenderly dealt with. This, too, is the story of a conversion; but it is as gradual and gentle as the other was sudden and startling. The apostle is first induced to leave Jerusalem for a time on a tour through the churches in the pleasant plain of Sharon. He is cheered by many tokens of the Lord's presence, two of which are specially recorded, the cure of Æneas and the raising of Dorcas, so that he carried gladness with him through all that western region. Having reached the coast, he takes a needed rest at Joppa, and surely it was no accident that he should be led to accept hospitality from a man whose trade was reckoned unclean by strict Jews on account of the contact with dead bodies it so frequently involved. It probably required considerable exercise of the grace of brotherly love to associate so intimately with a tanner, and this very circumstance would awaken in his mind some question as to the compatibility of these Jewish ideas with the freedom and brotherhood of the Gospel of Christ.

The days of rest were also days of prayer, for which the flat housetop, with its outlook over the blue Levant, afforded the best of opportunities. As he gazed across what seemed a limitless expanse, and thought of the countries lying beyond, of which he must have heard from Roman visitors to Jerusalem—Greece, Italy, Spain, Britain, far-away Thule—he could scarcely fail to recall the terms of the great commission, especially the words, "ye shall be witnesses unto me to the uttermost parts of the earth." Would he not long for the time when the gladness he had helped to diffuse through the plains of Sharon would overspread these distant lands as well? And would not thoughts of how it was to be accomplished exercise his mind? During those "many days"⁵ of quiet thinking and prayer, the great problem must needs have been turned over in his mind; and the more he thought of it, the more would he be prepared to welcome some solution of the many difficulties with which it bristled.

On one of these days the apostle, as is his wont at the hour of noon, is on the housetop praying. He has had a scanty breakfast, his appetite affected possibly by the perplexity of his position, at the limit of the field westward so far as he can see, though the great Western World lies there before him unreached, apparently unreachable. Faint with hunger, he falls asleep, and, as is natural, he dreams of food. But what a strange banquet! If he felt a natural revulsion from the thought of the dead bodies with which the tanner had to deal, what will he

¹ Acts x.² Acts xi.³ Acts xv, 7-11.⁴ Acts xi, 20 (Revised Version).⁵ Acts ix, 43.

make of the assortment on that tablecloth which seems let down from heaven to appease his hunger: "all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and creeping things, and fowls of the heaven"? And what is he to make of that voice, the tones of which recall the days of old: "Rise, Peter, kill and eat"? It is the same voice, but what a strange command! No wonder he replies, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything common or unclean." But again the voice is heard, "What God hath cleansed, make thou not common."¹

The answer to all his perplexities about the Western lands is there, if only he will think it out. The distinction of meats into clean and unclean had more practical effect than any other regulation of the law in keeping Jew and Gentile separate; for, touching the daily life as it did at every meal, it proved a complete barrier to social intercourse. It was in effect a separating wall, and this command meant the taking of it down.

It was little wonder, however, that Saint Peter found it hard to think out the answer for himself, especially as the conclusion to which it pointed was one so utterly opposed to all his most cherished convictions. But the process is greatly helped by the next link in the chain of God's wise and gracious providence. Three men from Caesarea are announced. "What can they want? I have my doubts of them, coming from that Roman place." But the Spirit of Christ encouraged him to put aside his doubts and frankly to entertain the men. Thus was he little by little prepared to accept an invitation which a week ago he would have firmly declined—an invitation to carry the word of life to a Roman centurion, without any pledge as to his being, or becoming, a proselyte to the Jewish faith.

The way by which Cornelius was led was quite as remarkable as that by which the apostle was induced to visit him. He was a devout man, generous, thoughtful, prayerful, with enlightenment enough to appreciate the monotheistic faith of the Jews, and to recognize what was good in their religious aspirations. Though the gates of the Temple would have been closed to him, the gate of heaven was not; so he, too, had his angel guidance and had been led in answer to his prayer to send to Joppa for the apostle. Thus was it proved that "God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." Cornelius, however, has still so much of the pagan in him that he prostrates himself before Saint Peter as if he were, indeed, what the emperor pretended to be, the representative of deity on earth. But Peter was no pope, and would not allow it. "Stand up," he said; "for I myself also am a man." He then talked to him in a friendly way, half apologizing for what still seemed to his own mind the inconsistency of accepting such an invitation—a veritable touch of nature—and afterward joined the little company which the good centurion had assembled to share the blessing. In a state of high spiritual excitement, as one would gather from the style of the report, he delivered his message, not beginning with Moses and all the prophets as would have been necessary had he been minded to make a proselyte of him, but with Jesus as Lord of all—Gentiles as well as Jews—and setting forth the great facts of his life, death, resurrection, and appointment as Judge of the living and the dead, till he had put his hearers in the position to realize the presence with them of a divine Savior, in whose name was offered to everyone who believed on him remission of sins.

The effect was electric. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard." It was a second Pentecost, so like the first that the six men whom Saint Peter had taken with him from Joppa as witnesses were filled with amazement. Again there were the tongues, not this time shown by the use of different languages, for which there was no occasion, but by utterances of praise and holy joy, which, coming from men who had never heard the name of Christ until that day, were as much a marvel to the on-lookers as when the different peoples gathered in Jerusalem heard in their own tongues the wonderful works of God. "Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid the water that these should not be baptized, which

¹ Acts x, 13-15 (Revised Version).

have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."

Thus was the old wall broken down, and the Gentiles made free of the city of God; and it only remains for the apostle to answer the natural questions, and to quiet the not unnatural complaints of the astonished Church at Jerusalem when the first rumors of these strange doings reached it. This he did, not by asserting his infallibility, or giving an *ex cathedrâ* pronouncement, but by modestly telling his thrilling story, and setting forth the great principle of justification by faith alone without the deeds of the law (which is thus proved to be Petrine as well as Pauline), and with such effect that "when they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."¹

The whole story is a most interesting and instructive unfolding of divine providence. Each one of the actors is led in a way he knows not of. Heavenly guidance is granted to each only in so far as is necessary for the guidance of his own steps. But the Spirit of God is in all, making all work together for the accomplishment of his holy, wise, and gracious purpose. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen."

CHAPTER X.

SUNSET IN JERUSALEM.

THE first great day of the Church's history is closing. The morning was bright and clear, and though clouds began to gather as the day wore on, the promise of the dawn was well fulfilled at noon, when even the enemy had to confess that Jerusalem was filled with the doctrine. But the noon time of success soon passed, the clouds gathered, the storm broke, the lightning struck the foremost man, and the fickle people, who had flocked around when all was fair and begun to favor the new doctrine, now went to the opposite extreme and joined the hue and cry against it; the Church was thinned and scattered; and, though the exiles carried the torch of God in all directions, those who remained at home were sorely straitened and beset. We shall presently hail the sunrise at Antioch, the brilliant opening of the Church's second day; but meantime we must watch the sunset at Jerusalem.

There are angry clouds in the evening sky; and yet we think less of their threatening masses than of the golden radiance which shines wherever they are touched by the light of heaven. The glory of the morning was one, the glory of the evening is another; that was calm and clear, this has a fiery luster all its own.

The famine cloud is the first we see. The Church in Jerusalem has always been poor. It had a few wealthy members who, by their liberality, relieved their poorer brethren; but since the persecution, which would naturally strike the wealthiest first, there is serious suffering; and, to crown all, the great famine of which we read not only in the Acts of the Apostles, and the work of Josephus, but in such historians of the empire as Dion Cassius and Suetonius, is now impending.

¹ Acts xi, 18 (Revised Version).

But who are these who have just arrived from the rich heathen city of Antioch, travel-worn with their long journey? They are representatives from the new Church there, which, knowing the straits of their brethren in Judea from whom they have received the evangel, and learning from one of their prophets that worse is yet to come, has made a contribution, every man giving according to his ability, and despatched it for their relief.¹ There is the light on the dark cloud.

But famine is not all. Herod, the king, is stretching forth his hands to vex the Church, and seems determined to use his great power to destroy it utterly. The mention of this monarch brings us for the first time into clear connection with the history of the empire; so it will be necessary to make a slight digression to show exactly where we stand. By doing so we shall also have some light on questions of date, which for some time we have not ventured to touch, the data being so vague and unsatisfactory.

The Emperor Tiberias, in whose reign our Lord was crucified, died 37 A. D., supposed by many to be the year of Saul's conversion, though recent authorities incline to an earlier date for that event. For the four years following — 37 to 41 A. D.—Caius, better known by his nickname of Caligula, disgraced the imperial purple. He it was who gave orders for the setting up in the Temple at Jerusalem, in its very holy of holies, a statue of himself, to make it impossible for the Hebrews to avoid worshiping him as God. The outrage was insupportable, and the whole country resounded with indignant protests. There are those who think that it was in part, at least, owing to the distraction caused by this high-handed proceeding that the persecution of the Christians ceased for a time. "So the Church throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria had peace, being edified."²

Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, was one of the many political adventurers who were watching their chances at the Roman court. In the closing years of the reign of Tiberias he attached himself to Caligula, whose star seemed then in the ascendant. For this he suffered imprisonment till Tiberias died, when his services to the new emperor procured him freedom first, and then appointment to a considerable portion of his grandfather's dominions. Acquainted as he was with the prejudices and passions of the Jews, he saw the folly of the reckless policy of the emperor, and it shows the strength of his influence with him that his intervention proved successful and the obnoxious order was first deferred and then withdrawn. The whole story is told by Josephus, very fully and vividly in his "*Antiquities*,"³ and again briefly in his "*Wars of the Jews*."⁴

When Caligula was assassinated in January, 41 A. D., Agrippa managed still to keep in favor at Rome, and, indeed, succeeded so well in ingratiating himself with the new emperor, Claudius, as to obtain from him almost immediately on his accession, the addition to his dominions of Judea, which, since the deposition of Archelaus, in 6 A. D., had been governed by procurators, Pontius Pilate being the sixth of the eight whose administration filled up the interval from 6 A. D. to 41 A. D. Thus, by the favor of two emperors in succession, Herod Agrippa was raised to the same high position his grandfather, Herod the Great, had occupied, becoming one of the greatest princes of the East. In this way it came about that, in the story of Jerusalem at the time we have reached, we read not of "the governor," as in the narrative of the crucifixion, but of "Herod, the king," who, as we have seen, renewed the persecution which had ceased to rage since the Emperor Caligula diverted the fear and fury of the Jews from the Christians to himself.

From the dark cloud of the great king's hate there comes a lightning stroke which carries off one of the three chief apostles: "He killed James the brother of John with the sword." We have heard nothing of him till now, but when we remember his prominent position among the twelve, and the temperament which in early days gained for him and his brother the

¹ Acts xi, 29.² Acts ix, 31.³ "*Antiquities*," XVIII, viii.⁴ "*Wars of the Jews*," II, x.

surname of Boanerges—sons of thunder—we may well suppose that he was not wanting in that energy and aggressiveness which would give occasion to his being singled out as the first victim of the new tyranny.

The brevity of the notice of this apostle's death has been often remarked on, especially as contrasted with the full account of Stephen's martyrdom; but is it not quite enough to suppose that the deed of blood was done in secret, as it was certainly done swiftly and unexpectedly, so that there would be nothing to report but the bare fact; and, though there was abundance of room for sentiment, the sacred historian never so indulges himself. He leaves it to his readers to recall the old days when the two sons of Zebedee asked that they might sit the one on the right of their Master and the other on his left in his kingdom, and received the thought-compelling answer: "Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"¹ James understands it all now. He drinks of the cup, is baptized with the baptism, and takes his place at his Lord's right hand, as the first of the twelve to win the martyr's crown; while the other son of Zebedee, after long years of toil, and faithful service, and patient suffering, brings up the rear, and takes his place on the left in "the glorious company of the apostles."

Herod, the king, was astute. He had no doubt heard how signally the Sanhedrim had failed when they made their first attempt on Peter and John; so he would reckon it scarcely prudent to make a beginning with either of them. It was safer to pass the first and second, and make the experiment on the third. But as no unseen hand had interposed, he saw nothing to fear from above, and as the Jews were well pleased, he had something to gain from below; and accordingly he felt emboldened to strike a blow which was likely to be fatal, by putting the great leader under arrest with a view to his public execution.

"These were the days of unleavened bread." Why is this so specially noted? Is it not to suggest the parallel which will at once occur to every reader of the Gospel: "Now, after two days was the feast of the Passover and the unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by subtlety and kill him: for they said, Not during the feast, lest haply there shall be a tumult of the people." So Herod, having seized his victim, dared not kill him till the feast was over, but "put him in prison, delivering him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him, intending after the passover to bring him forth to the people."

On the eve of that passover, Peter had said, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thee." But when the Shepherd was smitten, the sheep were scattered, and he was the weakest of them all. He is a different man now; and though he has to think not of himself alone but of the sheep of which he is now the shepherd, he does not shrink or quail. Despite the cheerless cell, and the iron chains which bind him to his guards, he sleeps as soundly as his Master did upon the storm-tossed sea, and we can fancy him dreaming, as he sleeps, of Calvary and "the glory that should follow."

Will Herod, the king, sleep as soundly and dream as sweetly on his couch of down? The days of the feast had been passing too slowly for his impatient spirit; but at all events he has his man quite safe. The prison is a fortress; the sixteen soldiers are strong and trusty; the chains, a needless precaution, yet make assurance doubly sure; several days are gone, and all is quiet and safe; to-morrow he will have his will. Such as these would be his waking thoughts; but, if he dreamed, would there be any vision of the theater at Cæsarea, with the crowd shouting his praises and proclaiming him a god, while the angel of death was at the very moment aiming at his heart his most poisoned shaft? We think of Browning's "*Instans Tyrannus*," after the tyrant had "soberly laid his last plan to extinguish the man."

¹ Mark x, 38.



DAVID ROBERTS.

JERUSALEM FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

"When sudden . . . how think ye, the end?
 Did I say 'without friend'?
 Say rather, from marge to blue marge
 The whole sky grew his targe
 With the sun's self for visible boss,
 While an Arm ran across
 Which the earth heaved beneath like a breast
 Where the wretch was safe prest!
 Do you see? Just my vengeance complete,
 The man sprang to his feet,
 Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed!
 —So, *I* was afraid!"

In this case, however, it was not the prayer of the man, for at the critical moment he was sleeping soundly in his chains, but the supplication of the faithful! The Church had been praying ever since the arrest. It seemed for a time as if there were no answer. Day after day, night after night had gone, and still there was no sign. But they ceased not. It is now the last night, and hope deferred is making hearts sick; but still they keep on, through the long night, for they too have their quaternions to relieve each other in their watching unto prayer. It is nearly six in the morning, and the dread day is breaking. May not the prayer meeting in Mary's house be now dismissed? Perhaps some of the more fainthearted of them thought so, but, if they did, their unbelief soon had a glad rebuke, when there came a knock, a sharp startling knock for such an early hour, and a minute after they saw the maid's astonished face as she ran back from the unopened gate, declaring it was Peter, for she knew his voice.

How true to nature it all is: the excitement of the maid Rhoda, the incredulity of the disciples, the supposition that it might be "his angel"! And how much more encouraging to ordinary mortals whose prayers at best are, what they are, than if we had been told they were all so confident of the answer that not one of them expressed the least surprise.

It was Peter himself, not his angel; and yet he had a story to tell them of his angel who had come to him in his cell, arrayed in light, waked him from sleep, unbound his chains, opened the doors one after another, swung back the iron gate, led him along the street till the prison was out of sight, and then, before he had time to make up his mind whether it was dream or reality, left him to find his way to his own company.

The tale is one that does not, of course, commend itself to those who, like the Sadducees of old, "say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit." If this be quite certain; if it be assuredly ascertained that there is no such being in the universe as an angel, or that, if there be, none of them can by any conceivable possibility visit this earth or give help and comfort even to the purest and most heavenly minded of its inhabitants—if all that be quite certain, then we must, with the modern Sadducees, do our best to explain it all away, and with our friend the critic warn people that "the clearness of the narrative is eminently adapted to influence us unduly in its favor." But is it quite certain? Perhaps the poet may have a deeper view than even the most learned critic:

"And is there care in heaven? And is there love
 In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
 That may compassion of their evils move?
 There is: else much more wretched were the case
 Of men than beasts: but O th' exceeding grace
 Of Highest God! that loves his creatures so,
 And all his works with mercy doth embrace,
 That blessed angels he sends to and fro,
 To serve to wicked men, to serve his wicked foe!

How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
 To come to succor us that succor want!
 How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
 The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant
 Against foul fiends to aid us militant?
 They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
 And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
 And all for love, and nothing for reward;
 O why should heavenly God to men have such regard!"

Were there no angels would there be for the sorrow-laden light at evening time?

CHAPTER XI.

TO THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH.

THE center is now shifted from Jerusalem to Antioch. We shall still have glimpses of the Jerusalem church, but only in so far as it comes into relation with the work which centers in the great capital of the East. The Church has now left its Jerusalem cradle, has passed through its Judea and Samaria school, and, set free from the law of its mother, is about to enter on the responsibilities of independent life and action. The great field of the world is opening before her; and, as her Moses retires, her Joshua comes to the front to lead her across the Jordan into the promised land, for she has been given "the heathen for her inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession." The prominent figure will no longer be Saint Peter, the great apostle of the circumcision, but Saint Paul, the still greater Apostle of the Gentiles.

Antioch was the third city of the empire, coming close after Alexandria, which was second only to Rome. It held almost the same position in the early Roman empire, as Constantinople afterward reached, as the gate of the East. It had been a center of trade and commerce for 300 years, during which time it had grown so rapidly in wealth and magnificence as almost to rival Rome itself. Some idea of its magnitude may be conveyed by mentioning that the city wall, very broad and high, formed an irregular ellipse, more than twelve miles in circumference, the long diameter of which was the famous Street of Herod, nearly five miles in length, paved with blocks of white marble for one-half the distance, lined with trees, adorned with statues, and furnished with a colonnade on both sides all the way to shelter from the sun and rain. The northern part of the city through which flowed the noble navigable river, the Orontes, was scarcely less magnificent, while outside the walls there were fine suburbs, and near the river below the city the famous groves of Daphne, a pleasure park ten miles in circumference devoted to the worship of Apollo the favorite deity of Antioch. Famed for its magnificence, the city was no less notorious for its vice, a striking proof of which is found in the fact that when the satirist Juvenal wished to express in the strongest terms the increasing moral degradation of Rome he put it thus: "the Syrian Orontes has long been flowing into the Tiber." Dean Howson says: "It is probable that no populations have ever been more abandoned than those of Oriental Greek cities under the Roman empire, and of these cities Antioch was the greatest and the worst. If we wish to realize the appearance and reality of the complicated heathenism of the first Christian century, we must endeavor to imagine the scene of that suburb, the famous Daphne, with its fountains and groves of bay trees, its bright buildings, its crowd of licentious votaries, its statue of Apollo—where, under the climate of

Syria, and the wealthy patronage of Rome, all that was beautiful in nature and in art had created a sanctuary for a perpetual festival of vice."

There was a large Jewish colony at Antioch, which, so far as its members were at all faithful to the law, would be a standing protest against these heathen abominations; but having its own separate quarter, and its own jurisdiction—for this was allowed under the empire—and being prohibited by its ordinances from holding any social intercourse with the Gentiles, its influence on public morals would be reduced to a minimum. Besides, their conception of the calling of Israel would lead the Jews to regard it as their duty, not so much to exercise direct influence on the life of the city, as to endeavor to induce as many as possible to abandon heathen society and cast in their lot with them as proselytes to the Jewish faith.

When those of the refugees from the persecution at Jerusalem who were enterprising enough to travel so far afield, reached Antioch, they preached their new Gospel, but only to the Jews. It had not occurred to them that they had any message except for the Jewish quarter. Meantime, however, believers in Christ were arriving, not directly from Jerusalem, but from places to which the Gospel had been carried by other exiles, for there was a constant stream of visitors from all quarters pouring into the Eastern metropolis; and the natural result of this would be to awaken a feeling of the expansiveness of the new Gospel and its adaptation to divers people, which could not but sooner or later find some embodiment in fact. So it came to pass that certain unnamed disciples from Cyprus and Cyrene, while resident in Antioch, and under the influence of its cosmopolitan ideas, bethought themselves of trying the experiment of speaking the word to the Greeks also.¹ "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord."

This seems to have happened quite independently of Saint Peter and the Church at Jerusalem; and it is instructive as showing that the Spirit's guidance was no special prerogative of the apostles, but was enjoyed by simple, earnest men who surrendered themselves to the love of Christ, and the longing for the advancement of his kingdom which glowed in their hearts, and impelled them to dare to be original in their aggressive work.

It was not very long, however, till tidings of these strange doings did reach the Church at Jerusalem; but in all probability not till after Saint Peter had made his report of what had befallen at Cæsarea. This we may infer from the fact that, instead of sending a deputation to remonstrate, they despatched a commissioner to inquire, and chose for the purpose a man as likely as any to be in sympathy with the new movement; for Barnabas was himself a man of Cyprus,² who had shown by his kindly interposition on behalf of Saul, when no one else seemed willing to trust him,³ that he was singularly free from prejudice. Such a man was not likely to object to an innovation which had so evidently the sanction of the Spirit of God; and accordingly, far from criticising, he rejoiced, and gave every encouragement to the new movement; for, as Saint Luke significantly remarks, "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."

Our translation of the surname Barnabas, "Son of Consolation," gives undue prominence to the tender side of his character. "Son of Exhortation" is the translation in the Revised Version; but that sounds bald and does not really give the sense to an English ear. The word in the original is the abstract noun corresponding to the designation Paraclete, which though translated "Comforter" in the English Bible, includes all the work of the Holy Spirit, in its full strength (as is implied in the syllable *fort*, and in the original meaning of the word "comfort"), as well as in all its tenderness. Barnabas had indeed a tender, loving heart, but he had also a strong, far-reaching mind, and a wise discrimination. He saw that the new mission was developing so fast that a strong man was needed at the helm, and, recalling the impression he had formed of the gifts of Saul of Tarsus, concluded that he was the very man

¹ Acts xi, 20 (Revised Version).

² Acts iv, 36.

³ Acts ix, 27.

for the position, and accordingly sent to his native place to seek him, apparently not very sure whether he was there, or where he was, for he had been out of sight for years. But the Spirit's guidance did not fail the Son of Comfort; for he not only discovered his man, but found him quite ready to give himself to the work.

The history of Saul during the uncertain number of years that must have elapsed since his conversion is wrapped in considerable obscurity, lighted up, however, here and there by personal references in the epistles. From his letter to the Galatians¹ we learn that immediately after his conversion he went away into Arabia. How long he remained there we have no exact means of knowing, but it must have been a considerable time—probably more than a year—for he tells us that from Arabia he returned to Damascus, and later on went up to Jerusalem, this visit being three years after his conversion,² so that the three years must have been distributed between Arabia and Damascus. We can understand how much he would feel the need of prolonged meditation and fresh study of the Scriptures before he was ready for his lifework. For this purpose no place was better suited than those solitudes of the southern desert where Moses and Elijah had both spent so long time in solitary communing with God. We can fancy him there with the roll of the Hebrew Bible or the Greek translation spread out before him, re-reading the entire Scriptures under the new light now flashing on almost every page, and, guided by the Spirit of God, patiently thinking out, in its relations to the old truth, the Gospel he was burning to declare as soon as God in his providence should open the way.

The way was not opened for many years; for, though he returned to Damascus and thereafter went to Jerusalem, the attempt he made in both places was frustrated by the rage of the Jews against their renegade leader,³ and it was found necessary for his safety that he should again retire to the comparative seclusion of his native place,⁴ in the neighborhood of which he probably remained until he was summoned, as we have seen, to Antioch.⁵

The long delay between his conversion and his entrance on his lifework is full of instruction as showing once more how necessary time, and thought, and much prayer are to the equipment of those who are called to be teachers and leaders in the Church. If ever a man might have dispensed with any further preparation than was secured by his marvelous conversion, it would have been Saul of Tarsus, the accomplished Rabbi, with all the learning, and talents, and force of character which had brought him to the front among the Pharisees, and with the intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures he had acquired during his long curriculum of study. But if even he needed so many years of thought, and study, and waiting upon God before taking up the work of his life, it surely cannot be wise to lay hands suddenly on any man, however promising, who has no other qualification for the work than the suddenness and thoroughness of his conversion.

We can admire the providence of God also in the successive failures at Damascus and Jerusalem, as necessarily turning his mind away from those of his own old faith and preparing him for going forth, with all the onrush of the pent-up force of his soul, on the mission to the Gentiles for which from the first his Master had set him apart. Moreover, it was necessary that the way should be prepared for the Church at Jerusalem accepting the new policy, else there would have been, not merely friction, but direct antagonism between the old apostles and the new one. It is evident that the Apostle Paul realized this danger from the very beginning. He gives this, in fact, as one reason for retiring at once to Arabia. It might have seemed most natural that he should join himself to the Church in Jerusalem, and by prolonged conference with its leaders become acquainted with the apostolic doctrine. But in this there would have been great risk of compromising both himself and them. For as yet there was no thought in their minds of breaking down the middle wall of partition, and how could he consult them as to

¹ Galatians i, 17.² Galatians i, 18.³ II. Corinthians xi, 32; Acts ix, 29.⁴ Acts ix, 30.⁵ Galatians i, 21.

his commission to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ? Here is the way he puts it in his letter to the Galatians: "But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus."¹ But by the time he was called to begin his work in Antioch, the way of the Lord was prepared, and it was with the full concurrence of the Mother Church that he and Barnabas gave themselves to the work among the heathen in Antioch.

For a year the two labored together in the great city and made such an impression on it that the inhabitants felt the presence of a new force among them. As long as the movement had been confined to the Jewish quarter, it attracted no attention. One more sect among Jews was neither here nor there to Antiochenes. But now that, instead of keeping to themselves in their own quarter, these new agitators had invaded the city proper, and were beginning to exercise a powerful influence on the life of the Greek population, they could call them Jews no longer, for they were as different as possible from that exclusive separatist community. They must have a new name for them, and as in their addresses to the people there was one name reiterated over and over again, the ever-recurring name of Christ, they called them Christians: "the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."

CHAPTER XII.

THE FIRST FOREIGN MISSION.

THE new expansive spirit of the Church cannot long confine itself even to so wide a field as the great city of Antioch. The year already spent has afforded time for fully testing the principles to which the followers of Christ are now committed, and for securing a sufficient foothold in the metropolis to afford a strong base of operations in pursuing the large enterprise on which they are bent. For the same Spirit which prompted them a year ago to leave the Jewish quarter and invade the Gentile city now inspires them with the great thought of making Antioch not their field but only the center of a world-wide propaganda, having for its ultimate object the carrying out of the great commission to its last word by sending the Gospel of the Christ of God to the uttermost parts of the earth.

With such thoughts in their minds the leaders of the Church observed a special season of waiting upon God, their earnestness and deep sense of responsibility showing itself in the fasting which accompanied their supplications. As they so "ministered unto the Lord and fasted," it was made plain to them to be the will of the Lord that their best two men should be set apart to carry the Gospel to the regions beyond: "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Thus their way was made plain; and though it must have been a severe strain upon their faith to allow the two men on whom they depended most for the prosecution of the work at home, to leave them so soon (for what was a year's work in a great city like Antioch?), they did not hesitate a moment, but at once made arrangements to carry out the instructions.

Another season of prayer and fasting introduced the solemn act of ordination and the two missionaries, henceforth spoken of as apostles (a Greek word having the precise significance

¹ Galatians i, 15-17 (Revised Version).

which missionary has in Latin), set out on their adventurous and, to all human appearance, quixotic expedition with the clear conviction, shared in by the Church which bade them God-speed, that they were "sent by the Holy Ghost."

1. CYPRUS. It was natural that they should go to Cyprus first, for it was the nearest and most accessible of the countries to the west of them, and had special claims as the home of Barnabas, and of those men who, with others from the distant Cyrene, first preached the Gospel to the Greeks. Moreover, it had a very large number of Jewish settlers, chiefly on account of the famous copper mines (*aes Cyprium* or *Cuprium* was the name by which the metal was known to the Romans, whence our word "copper") having passed into Jewish hands, for Josephus, writing to Herod the Great, tells us, "Cæsar made him a present of one-half the revenue of the copper mines in Cyprus and committed the care of the other half to him."¹ As a natural consequence large numbers of his Jewish subjects settled there to manage the trade, and some of them, of whom Barnabas himself was probably an example, would share in the wealth derived from it.² True, their mission was more particularly to Gentiles; but even the Apostles to the Gentiles never forgot the original instruction, "beginning at Jerusalem," "to the Jew first." The Jews were the prepared people, and not only loyalty to their Master's instructions but the sound policy of beginning with those with whom they had most in common, prompted them to make a practice of delivering their message first in the synagogue if there were one, and if not, in any gathering of their countrymen they could find, like the prayer meeting by the river side at Philippi.

The way lay by Seleucia, the port of Antioch, from which they took ship to Salamis, a large mercantile town with several Jewish synagogues in which the apostles preached the Word, with what results we are not informed. Nor have we any particulars of what befell them as they traversed the island from east to west, a distance of about 100 miles. At the other extremity of the island was Paphos, a name infamous on account of its associations in classical history with the worship of Venus in its worst and most odious forms. It is not, however, for this reason that the historian dwells for a moment on the work in Paphos, but because of the importance of the personage who is here numbered among his converts, being none other than the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus.

The reference to this proconsul is one of the illustrations to which we referred in the introduction to this book, of the accuracy of Saint Luke being triumphantly vindicated where it seemed to be most successfully assailed. A general statement of Strabo, the geographer, referring to the time of Augustus, classed Cyprus among the provinces over which not proconsuls but propretors were appointed; and it was quietly assumed by critics of a certain type that it was a blunder in the Acts, and so far a proof that the book could not have been written by a contemporary. Later on, however, a passage was discovered in another historian, Dion Cassius, which confirmed the statement of Strabo indeed, but added that five years later the distribution of provinces was so altered that Cyprus was put in the other class. And this is not all. Still later, coins were discovered with inscriptions on them which demonstrated that Saint Luke was right, and last of all, as one of the results of the investigations carried on since Britain obtained control of Cyprus, a coin was discovered actually bearing the name of Paulus the proconsul!

The proconsul seems to have been a man with deep spiritual cravings which had found no satisfaction in the Roman Pantheon. We are apt to think meanly of him for allowing himself to come under the influence of a charlatan like the Jew Bar-Jesus, who called himself Elymas, the wise man. But we must not forget that at this time the Jews were the only people who had deep religious convictions; and while this explains the fact that, in spite of the unattractiveness of their creed and cult, they gained so many proselytes, it also gave to designing men like this

¹ "Antiquities," XVI, iv, 5.

² See Acts iv, 37.

Bar-Jesus the opportunity of trading upon the spiritual hunger of seekers for the hidden things of the universe like this Sergius Paulus. Such heartless villainy was surely not too sternly rebuked, when, seeing him striving to keep the proconsul in his toils, Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, fastened his eyes on him and said, "O full of all guile and all villainy, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" Nor was the punishment too great when he was suddenly smitten with blindness for a season.

It is from this time that the old name Saul is dropped in favor of the now familiar Paul. The two names, though similar in sound, are quite different, the one being the royal Hebrew name, the other a Latin name, which had been borne by many members of the distinguished Roman family to which probably the proconsul belonged. The change seems to be in some way connected with the conversion of this Paulus, but how, precisely, we can only conjecture. It has been supposed that the name belonged to him as a free-born Roman, in addition to his Jewish name of Saul; and, if this be so, it is not unnatural to suppose that the meeting with the proconsul revived the recollection of it, and that it was adopted and used thereafter because, being a Gentile name, it was in keeping with his work as the Gentiles' Apostle.

2. ASIA MINOR. From Cyprus the missionary party proceeded to the main land, their objective point being Antioch, in Pisidia. When they landed at Perga, the courage of one of the three failed. As is the wont of the dispassionate historian, the simple fact is noted without a word of comment that "John [Mark] departed from them and returned to Jerusalem"—a great grief no doubt to his cousin Barnabas,¹ and so impressing the mind of Paul with his unsuitability for the work that later on he separated from Barnabas rather than take up again with his cousin. Perhaps the "perils of robbers" were too much for him to face, for Antioch, in Pisidia, was in the midst of a country which then, as now, was infested with brigands.

This portion of the missionary tour has recently been invested with fresh interest by the new evidence brought forward by Prof. W. M. Ramsay, who has made a most careful exploration of the entire region, in support of the view long held by a small number of scholars that Phrygia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia, were not separate provinces, but mere districts of the southern portion of the great Roman province of Galatia, which extended from north to south right across the plateau of Asia Minor, nearly reaching the Mediterranean on the south and the Black Sea on the north. According to the view which has prevailed hitherto as to the extent of the province of Galatia, we have on the one hand a group of churches in which Saint Paul evidently took the deepest interest, to none of which is any of his numerous extant letters addressed, and on the other hand we have an important epistle addressed to a people among whom we have no record of his having founded a single church. Both these suppositions are, of course, separately admissible; but it certainly adds much to our interest, both in this missionary tour and in the Epistle to the Galatians, to be able to connect them together.

Antioch, in Pisidia, though it had no pretensions to rank with the great Syrian Antioch, was nevertheless a city of much importance, situated as it was at the convergence of several important Roman roads, and holding the position of "a governing and military center" for all these districts which, according to Professor Ramsay, made up the southern and by far the more considerable portion of the great province of Galatia. This may account for its being singled out for a full notice of the apostle's work there, which is given in the Acts.²

This lengthened notice furnishes us with an interesting sketch of the apostle's method of proceeding in his missionary work. He first found out some leading synagogue, if there were many, or where there was only one, as in this case, "the synagogue," and took his place among the worshipers. When the regular service, the most important part of which was "the reading

¹See Colossians iv, 10 (Revised Version).

²Acts xiii, 4-52.

of the Law and the Prophets," was over, it was the custom to invite any Rabbi or stranger of distinction who might be present to give "a word of exhortation." This was the apostle's opportunity, of which he would avail himself, as on this occasion, by giving an address based in all probability on the passages which had been read. This would enable him to begin on the common ground of their faith in Jehovah and appreciation of his dealings with his people in the ages past;¹ then he would proceed in the most natural way to speak of Jesus, making as much as possible, perhaps, as here, of the witness of John, whom all accounted to be a prophet;² after which he would pour out his heart to them in speaking of the great salvation accomplished in his death, which was no calamity but the fulfillment of the divine purpose, and completed in his resurrection, of which their own Scriptures gave many a hint and forecast;³ and conclude by a free offer of forgiveness in his name, not to Jews alone, but to "everyone that believeth," and a solemn warning not to neglect so great salvation.⁴

As long as his countrymen would listen, as in this case they did with great interest, both on the part of the Jews and the proselytes, he would continue the work among them, in the hope of making them the lower courses of the spiritual building he hoped to erect in the place. But when they rejected the Gospel, as in this case they did later on when their passions were inflamed by jealousy at the sight of "the whole city gathered together to hear the word of God," Gentiles just as welcome as themselves, he would turn from them with some such words as those reported here: "It was necessary that the Word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth." Something like this seems to have been the usual practice of the apostle wherever there was a Jewish population to claim his first attention: how he acted with a purely Gentile population will appear when we watch his conduct at Lystra.

After the Jews turned away, the Gentiles of Antioch still maintained their interest; and that it was no mere passing excitement is proved by the recorded result that "the Word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region." We can understand, then, how, notwithstanding the success of the plot of the leading Jews against them, aided by some wealthy lady proselytes who probably had much influence with the authorities, in consequence of which they were expelled from the city as disturbers of the peace, they shook off the dust of their feet, according to their Lord's instructions, and departed in no crestfallen spirit but "filled with joy and the Holy Ghost." They would need such spiritual exultation to sustain them in the hot march of twenty-eight hours, along a road with scarce a tree to shade them, and scarce a spring to quench their thirst, before they could reach Iconium, which was their next field of labor and suffering. As, however, their experience at Antioch was so nearly repeated there,⁵ we shall not dwell on it.

At Lystra, however, the events recorded are of such interest that we must beware of dwelling too long over them. It was natural that, after being expelled from two cities in succession by the machinations of their countrymen, the apostles should prefer to pay their next visit to a place where they would have a purely Gentile population to deal with. This was found in Lystra, and the fact that there was no synagogue here to afford a base from which to work may have been the reason why it was necessary that some sign should be given to the people that the strangers had indeed a message from heaven to deliver. This purpose was served by the cure of a well-known cripple, which, however, led, in the most natural way, to exceedingly embarrassing consequences; for the people, greatly excited, at once concluded that in the persons of Barnabas and Paul they were favored with a visit from their tutelary deity Jupiter, and his attendant Mercury.

¹ Acts xiii, 16-22.² Acts xiii, 23-25.³ Acts xiii, 26-37.⁴ Acts xiii, 38-41.⁵ Acts xiv, 1-7.

It has been pointed out that in this we have a hint of the personal appearance of the apostles, for Jupiter was always represented as tall and majestic in appearance, while Mercury was small and insignificant in comparison, with the litheness and agility appropriate to the swift messenger of the gods. This confirms the impression made by Saint Paul's own reference to the disparaging remarks of some of his detractors: "His bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible,"¹ and strangely enough there is an old legend entitled "The Acts of Paul and Thekla," which Professor Ramsay proves to be of some historical value, in which it is related that a certain Onesiphorus of Iconium met Paul on the Lystra road, and described him as "a man small in size, with meeting eyebrows, with a rather large nose, bald-headed, bow-legged, strongly built, full of grace, for at times he looked like a man and at times he had the face of an angel."

Another point of great interest is the connection of this experience of the apostles at Lystra with the well-known classic legend of Philemon and Baucis, an aged couple who resided in this very region, and as a reward of their piety enjoyed a visit from Jupiter and his attendant Mercury. Their poor cottage was transformed into a splendid temple and the aged couple were installed as priest and priestess; and when they died they were changed into two trees that grew side by side in the neighborhood, an oak and a linden. The Latin poet Ovid takes this Lycaonian legend and works it up into one of his "Metamorphoses," very much as Tennyson takes the Arthurian legends and works them up into the "Idylls of the King." How interesting it is, and how strengthening to our confidence in the accuracy of our historian, to find this confirmation of the popular superstitions of these people in the pages of the famous Roman poet! If the fame of this reputed visit of Jupiter and Mercury was so widespread as to make it familiarly known in far-distant Rome, we can well believe that the people of the place would be very full of it, and that nothing would be more natural than that they should conclude that the visit which had made their country so famous long ago was vouchsafed them a second time.

It is a touch of nature also that their jubilant cry should be "in the speech of Lycaonia,"² the effect of which seems to have been that the apostles did not understand what they meant, so that there was time for the people to go to the temple of Jupiter and stir up the priest and get oxen for sacrifice and deck them with garlands for the great occasion, before Paul and Barnabas knew what they were about.

When they did understand what all the excitement meant, they were horrified beyond measure: "they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness."³

This impromptu address is remarkable for many things. It is Paul all through, marks of genuineness in every clause, every thought of it echoed afterward in his later speeches and his letters. It differs entirely from his addresses to his countrymen, making no use of the Scriptures, but appealing to the great principles of natural religion which they might be reasonably expected to hold in common with himself. Many a lesson in dealing with men may be gathered from a study of the words of Saint Paul.

If the apostles expected by transferring their labors to Lystra to escape the machinations of their countrymen they were doomed to disappointment; for, learning where they had gone, and fearing that they might get too strong a footing in their neighborhood, the Jews of Antioch and

¹ II. Corinthians x, 10.

² Acts xiv, 11.

³ Acts xiv, 14-17 (Revised Version).

Iconium followed them up, and, learning the state of things, so worked on the excited feelings of the people as to impel them to the opposite extreme. In all probability they would represent that the visit was not of gods, but of demons, for according to the notions then current, the one hypothesis was as good an explanation as the other; and those who are at all acquainted with human nature, especially as showing itself in the actions and passions of mobs, will not be at all surprised that the same people who were ready one day to worship the apostles as gods, were as ready the next to drive them out of the place with brutal violence. So it was; and so rough had been their treatment, and so well aimed the stones which had been cast at Paul, that the few friends who gathered round him when the mob scattered took him for dead.

It has been surmised with some degree of probability that in this little group was young Timothy, whom Saint Paul found at Lystra on his next visit,¹ and to whom later he wrote in these terms: "Thou didst follow my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings; what things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: and out of them all the Lord delivered me."²

Undeterred by all this hard experience, the apostle still went on, and preached his Gospel in Derbe, where he "made many disciples," and then with a splendid courage returned upon his own tracks, revisiting the places where he had suffered so much, not for the purpose of renewing the provocation of public preaching, but to strengthen and encourage the little band of believers in Christ who were the fruit of his labors: "confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith," at the same time telling them with all frankness "that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God." He was careful, too, to do some organizing after a simple fashion, by ordaining elders in each church. And so they worked their way back, avoiding Tarsus the old home of the one apostle, and Cyprus the old home of the other; for their movements are guided not by personal preference but by the Spirit of the Lord, doing some evangelistic work in Perga which they had only passed through on their way out, and then journeying to Attalia, from which port they took ship to Antioch, and to the brethren assembled there gave in their first report.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GREAT CONTROVERSY.

IF the apostles expected rest from tribulation on their return home, they were sadly disappointed; for a reaction had set in at the south on the burning question of the terms on which Gentiles could be received into the Church, and a strong party were insisting on the old position of compelling them to acknowledge themselves proselytes to the Jewish faith by submitting to circumcision before they could be entitled to salvation by Christ. This position was so completely antagonistic to that which had been taken by the Church at Antioch, and applied with such marked success by Paul and Barnabas, that it was no wonder that the arrival of some of these narrow-minded brethren from the south on a crusade against the advanced ideas of the Northern Church should give rise to "no small dissension and questioning."

It is hard for us now to realize the magnitude and difficulty of the question. The bringing in of the Gentiles was no new subject to the Jew. His scriptures were full of it. His temple was not for Israel alone, but "a house of prayer for all nations." There was no objection, therefore, to as many Gentiles as chose coming to share their privileges. But surely not without submission to the law! It was on that condition that the Jew himself enjoyed

¹ See Acts xvi, 1.

² II. Timothy iii, 10, 11 (Revised Version).

them; why, then, should a Gentile have them on any easier terms? Let them come and worship in the Temple by all means, provided that in doing so they obey the regulations which have been in force from time immemorial. Let them share in the blessings of the kingdom of God, and the reign of Israel's Messiah, but not without as strict obedience to the laws of the kingdom on the part of the foreigner as of the home born. If we try to put ourselves in the place of a devout Israelite of the time, who had by no means parted with his old convictions, but had simply accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah for whom he had been taught to look, we shall be able to see not a little reason in their contention, and to understand why they should even lose their temper in defending their rights.

But had not all been settled by the vision at Joppa, the reception of Cornelius, and the discussion at Jerusalem when Saint Peter's explanations were accepted and his conduct approved? No doubt it was, in a way; but the convictions of a lifetime can scarcely be uprooted in a week; and we can well understand that the first impression made by the apostle's recital and the evidence he furnished that it was of the Spirit that these converts at Cæsarea should be received, would overbear all opposition, and yet that some of the sterner spirits would only be half convinced, and would take the first opportunity of reimposing the restrictions which had been so suddenly removed. And when they heard that not merely a few converts at Cæsarea, whose case might be regarded as exceptional, but Romans and Greeks everywhere were being brought in by these innovators at Antioch, they would think it high time to raise aloft the old banner, and contend earnestly for the old faith of Israel. It was one thing to admit a few Gentiles who would be in a hopeless minority, and leave the Church as a whole Jewish and the control in Jewish hands; it was quite another thing to go all over the world and establish Gentile churches, so numerous, and growing so rapidly, that the Jewish element would be completely overwhelmed, and the nations, instead of being ruled by Israel and its Messiah, would extinguish Israel altogether, put aside its Law, set at nought its Temple, forget its Scriptures, and accept nothing but its Christ.

Let us not be too hard, then, on these conservative Jews, or wonder that a controversy which is now so completely dead should be so very serious in the apostle's day. There can be little doubt that this "dissension and disputation" raised by the visit of these men from Judea caused Saint Paul much more anxiety than anything he had encountered in his missionary tour.

The account given in the Acts is very brief, but it is supplemented by the apostle himself in the Epistle to the Galatians¹ from which we gather many interesting particulars. From it we learn that it was in communion with God² he gained the assurance that the best way to meet the crisis was to send a deputation to the Church at Jerusalem. This he proposed to the Church at Antioch, and they agreed, appointing himself and Barnabas, and "certain other of them," one of whom we learn from the epistle was Titus, appropriately included as a Gentile convert who had not been circumcised.

The apostles, while ever looking upward for direction, left no stone unturned to further their cause. All along the route to Jerusalem, they told their story, and that with such effect that it was received not with suspicion but with gladness. And when they reached Jerusalem Saint Paul took the precaution of seeing some of the leading men privately first, to make sure that they would have the whole case before them, before they committed themselves in public. How natural it all seems, and how clearly it shows on the one hand that the guidance of the Spirit is never intended to supersede the fullest use of all the ordinary means by which conclusions are reached, and on the other that the use of proper means need not weaken, but may rather strengthen our conviction that the result is of God! It was because there had been so much earnest consultation, first in private and then in public, that in the end the Church could preface her decision with the words: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us."

¹ Galatians ii, 1-10.

² Acts xv, 2.



ROBERTS.

NAZARETH.

There is, indeed, always the possibility of error, of mistaking our own conclusions for the mind of the Spirit, but this danger is not at its maximum but at its minimum, when all proper means have been used, and all fitting counselors consulted.

When the question came up for public discussion in the regularly convened assembly, the party of opposition, consisting as was to be expected of those who had been strict Pharisees and, in fact, still remained so though they had accepted Jesus as their Messiah, took a definite stand, declaring, even after hearing of the wonderful work among the Gentiles in the north, "that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses." It would be an anxious moment for the deputation, for the advanced party was not at all likely to be in force here as in Antioch. But the intervention of Saint Peter saved the day. He does not speak as a pope, or even as a prelate. He takes his natural place as a leader, and speaks early as one who has special acquaintance with the subject. And what he says is in the highest degree honorable to him. His prejudices would be all on the conservative side, and it must have cost him much to take a decided stand in favor of the new apostles and their ways. But he is a true man, and has not only asked direction from the Spirit but has accepted it when it came; so he simply reminds the brethren of what had happened "a good while ago" in the matter of Cornelius, and candidly confesses that the plain inference was that God "put no difference between them and us." What a surrender of cherished rights and privileges was there, and how nobly does he press for the inevitable conclusion: "Now, therefore, why tempt ye God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they."¹

So honest, brave and timely a speech from the leading apostle produced a profound impression, which was greatly deepened when Barnabas and Paul followed it up by a fresh recital of what God had wrought by them among the Gentiles; and before the opposition had time to recover, James, the brother of the Lord, who seems to have been the presiding officer of the Mother Church, brought the matter to a point by a wise address, confirming the position taken by Saint Peter by an appeal to the prophecy of Amos, and concluding with a judgment, or as we should say in modern ecclesiastical phrase, "a deliverance," to this effect, "that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles turn to God; but that we write unto them, that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood."

The proposition was something of a compromise, conceding the main point, by declining to insist on circumcision and strict obedience to the law, but at the same time recommending that, in certain particulars which were peculiarly offensive to the Jewish brethren, the Gentiles should be careful not to injure their susceptibilities. It casts a lurid side-light on the state of the Gentile world in respect of morality, that a breach of the seventh commandment should be put in the category of things to be abstained from out of regard to Jewish sentiment. It is explained by the well-known fact that not only was there in such society as that of Antioch no conscience against this sin, but that it was an acknowledged and applauded part of their heathen worship. Well, then, might the Jews regard it as of great importance that there should be a special safeguard against the possibility of intrusion into the Church of this heathenish abomination.

The decision of the council was embodied in an official letter which was handed to the deputation, strengthened by the addition of Judas and Silas as representatives of the Mother Church; and so the whole matter was happily settled — for the time.

Only for the time, however; compromises may be useful to tide over a crisis, but so long as a great question remains open, difficulties are sure to recur. And so it was here. There had

¹ Acts xv, 10, 11 (Revised Version).

been a relaxation of the law in favor of the Gentiles who did not wish to become Jews, but the Jews themselves and the proselytes were still bound as before; and the question was sure to come up, Is that quite fair? If a Gentile can be a good Christian without keeping the law of Moses, why not a Jew? The fathers, indeed, might not be likely to raise that question, but the children certainly would. Contrasting their own bondage with the freedom of the others, they would naturally ask, If there is no real necessity for all these restrictions and regulations, as is proved by the admission of the Gentiles without them, why should we be expected to comply with them? In any case there would be a cleavage in the Church so long as the question was not settled in such a way as to apply to all alike.

Difficulties would be always cropping up, and at times serious misunderstanding would be the result. A remarkable illustration of this is furnished by the dispute between the two leading apostles, of which an account is given in the Epistle to the Galatians. On one occasion when Saint Peter was visiting the Church at Antioch, he very naturally and properly associated on the most familiar terms with the Gentile Christians, acting in the spirit of the great lesson he had been taught at Joppa. If he was invited to partake of the very varied food set before him in the vision, he might surely live in free intercourse with the members of the Antioch Church, sharing the common meal even where Jewish formalities were not observed. Meantime, however, some narrow-minded people had come from the Jerusalem Church, and, hearing of what their leader had done, took him to task. "It is all very well," they would say to him, "for you to let Cornelius do as he pleases in such matters; and all these Gentile Christians are free, according to the decree of the council; but you are a Jew, you are bound by the law as much as ever, and it is not right for you to eat with the Gentiles." The good man was sorely perplexed, lacking the full courage of his convictions, and naturally anxious not to alienate his old friends in Jerusalem; so he yielded, and withdrew from his new friends, his influence leading others to do the same, among whom, strange to say, was Barnabas himself. The crisis was acute; for to refuse fellowship with Gentile Christians was virtually to retract what had been done; so the Apostle Paul withstood his colleague to the face, and set before him in a few strong sentences the plea for Christian liberty and the full equality of the Gentiles in the sight of God, which he afterward elaborated in the great argument of the Epistle to the Galatians. Saint Peter was too good and true a man to harbor resentment towards his brother whom he truly loved,¹ or to do anything to hinder him in his great work. But there were others of a very different spirit, bigots, who, not content with denouncing him in Jerusalem, followed him up in his missionary tours, trying to stir up the Jewish Christians everywhere against him, casting doubts on his right to be an apostle, and insisting that, after all, there could be no salvation except on condition of obedience to the law of Moses. It was a terrible trial, and many an anxious day and sleepless night it cost him. The personal opposition he must have felt very keenly; but most of all did it distress him that the doctrines of these men set aside altogether the Gospel of the grace of God, annulled the righteousness which is by faith unto all and upon all them that believe, and sought to reintroduce the old Jewish idea of righteousness by the works of the law. This he knew by painful experience to be no way of life; and it was terrible to him to think that seekers after God should be so grievously misled by men speaking in the name of Christ.

Was this fierce controversy an unmixed evil? By no means. It did much for the apostle's own development, enabling him with ever-increasing clearness to see, and with growing fullness to state, the Gospel of the grace of God; and who can estimate the gain of the Church in the possession of these priceless letters, generally spoken of as the great Epistles, to the Galatians, the Corinthians, the Romans, which were wrung from his busy brain and throbbing heart by the exigencies of the strife?

¹See II. Peter iii, 15.

We have much to learn, also, from a careful consideration of the apostle's own action in those cases of difficulty which were ever confronting him. We have seen how he characterized the conduct of Saint Peter and those who acted with him in the matter of intercourse with the Gentile Christians at Antioch. He would have made no objection to their observing all Jewish formalities among themselves, but when they made the non-observance of these on the part of the Gentile Christians a ground for separating from them, and denying to them the right hand of fellowship, he was up in arms at once. On the same principle, when he was in Jerusalem he made no objection to adopting the suggestion of the brethren there that he should join in a votive service which was then proceeding in the Temple.¹ He had not ceased to be a Jew, and, therefore, he had no objection himself to complying with Jewish observances, especially if it would bring comfort to the Jerusalem Christians; but he would have resisted to the last any attempt to impose such observances on anyone, Jew or Gentile, as necessary to salvation. He had no objection to Timothy being circumcised, because his mother was a Jewess, and, if the family desired it, there was no reason why it should be forbidden; but when it was proposed to compel Titus, he "gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour." His whole conduct throughout the entire controversy turned on this simple principle: obedience to the ceremonial law was optional with those Christians who had been Jews; if any choose, no one need hinder; but if any refused, no one must compel. But for Gentiles no other door than Christ himself was needed; and no law, no ceremonies, interposed between them and full salvation by faith alone. In all things he acted on his own great principle: "With freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

WE are now entering on the story of a campaign which in point of real interest and importance throws all others into the shade. It is the invasion of Europe by Asia, not with a force of 3,000,000 of warriors, as when the renowned Xerxes led his hosts against the little Greek republic, but by four unarmed men who had to earn their living as they went along, and seemed at the mercy of any magistrates who might arrest them, or any mob that might be minded to maltreat them; and, though often hauled before the authorities and often in danger of their lives by the violence of the populace, they won the day, they planted the standard of the cross on the continent of Europe, and left the flag flying from all the principal strongholds, often to be dishonored, indeed, but never again to be torn down.

The story is told so simply and has become so familiar that it is very difficult for a modern reader to realize how great it is. It suffers also from the unhappy division of the chapters, which is so badly done here that neither the beginning of the journey nor the end of it is marked in any way, the result being that few ordinary readers get a distinct conception of it as a whole. If the entire section² within which the record of it is comprised had been in some way set off from the rest, it would have been much more easily grasped. Perhaps sometime we may have an edition of the Bible for popular use with the same advantages for ordinary readers which all other books enjoy.

Who was the general of this great campaign? Not Paul; he certainly did not plan it out; nor did the Church at Antioch. Saint Paul was the captain in the field; but who was the

¹ Acts xxi, 18-26.

² Acts xv, 36, to xviii, 22.

commander-in-chief? This is made very plain as we follow its movements. It was "the Spirit of Jesus."¹

All Saint Paul thought of when he resolved to set out again from Antioch was to visit with Barnabas the brethren in the churches they had planted, and see how they fared; and even for that he made a very bad beginning, for the two leaders had a quarrel before they started. Barnabas wanted to take with them his cousin Mark, who had by this time seen his mistake in leaving the former expedition at Perga; but Paul would not have him, thinking no doubt that the man who had put his hand to the plow and turned back was not fit for the kingdom of God. Possibly Paul was too severe, and, it may be, somewhat dictatorial, of which, perhaps, we have an indication in one of his latest letters where he is careful to speak of Mark as "profitable for the ministry";² and Barnabas evidently allowed private partiality to influence him too much on a question of great public importance. Neither would yield to the other; so they had to separate. It must have made them both very miserable at the time, and done great harm to the cause; and some of the more faint-hearted of the Antioch Christians would think that the mission was spoiled, for how could the Spirit of Jesus acknowledge an enterprise begun in such a temper? But the Spirit of Jesus is no less patient and forgiving than was the Man Jesus in the old days; and he could see better than any of their brethren could that both men were thoroughly conscientious, and sinned not willfully, but through weakness of the flesh; so he could find it in his great heart both to bless Barnabas in Cyprus and greatly to prosper Paul in his far larger circuit.

Here, as so often, God "made the wrath of man to praise him," for it is probable that more would be accomplished by the two men apart than they could have done together; and he "restrained the remainder thereof," for we know from a casual reference in one of the epistles that the two apostles did not continue estranged, but could work together very well when the heat of their contention had had time to cool.³ The painful incident supplies another instance of the fidelity of the historian, and furnishes us with a valuable and often much-needed lesson of charity, and patience, and hope, when the inconsistencies of good men tempt us to despair of the future of the Church.

Saint Paul chose Silas, known as Silvanus in the epistles, as his colleague, in place of Barnabas. He was one of the deputation that had been sent from Jerusalem with the decrees of the council, and had been so much interested in the work at Antioch that he had cast in his lot with the brethren there,⁴ his co-deputy Judas returning to Jerusalem. It is an interesting token of the cordial relations between Saint Peter and Saint Paul, notwithstanding their temporary antagonism on the matter of intercourse with the Gentile Christians, that the former in his First Epistle speaks of the man who left the Jerusalem Church and became the companion of the Apostle of the Gentiles as "Silvanus, our faithful brother, as I account him."⁵

We shall find it of advantage to distinguish three stages in the expedition: (1) the work in Asia Minor; (2) in Macedonia, the centers being Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea; and (3) in Achaia, where the interest is divided between Athens and Corinth.

1. ASIA MINOR. As Barnabas was taking Cyprus, it was not necessary that Paul should follow the same route as before; so, restricting himself to the mainland, he traveled over the mountain passes into Cilicia, where he would have the opportunity of visiting the region of those early labors in Tarsus and its neighborhood of which we read in the Epistle to the Galatians.⁶

The tour of visitation of the churches from Tarsus in the east to the Pisidian Antioch in the west must have occupied considerable time; but as the main object of the historian is to tell of the new departure, no details are given except the adoption at Lystra of Timothy as a third

¹ Acts xvi, 7 (Revised Version).

² II. Timothy iv, 11.

³ Corinthians ix, 6.

⁴ Acts xv, 27.

⁵ I. Peter v, 12 (Revised Version).

⁶ Galatians i, 21.

missionary, completing the familiar trio in the epistles, "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus." We know, not only from the statement in the Acts that this young disciple was "well reported of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium," but from the interesting particulars mentioned by Saint Paul himself in one of his letters¹ that he did not "lay hands suddenly" on him, but had the best of reasons for believing that he would be a worthy and well-qualified coadjutor in the work, as indeed he proved. The fact that his mother was a Jewess, while his father was a Greek, would be an additional advantage in view of the delicate relations between the two elements in the Church.

Having finished the visitation of the churches, the apostle seems to be groping his way very much in the dark. He is earnestly desirous of knowing the will of the Lord, but he does not recognize it with perfect clearness. In this respect we discover a striking inferiority to his Master who in the days of his flesh, walking in the light in perfect purity, knew always what was his Father's will. It is quite different with the servant here. His first idea is to "speak the Word in Asia," by which he understood the most western of the provinces into which what we now know as Asia Minor was divided — Asia Minima we may call it for distinction. But he finds he is mistaken, for he is "forbidden of the Holy Ghost." The next idea is to go north to Bithynia, but again "the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not." Thus the smaller doors on the left and on the right were closed that he might be constrained to go up to the "wide door and effectual" which was awaiting his touch right in front to open for the reception of his Gospel. One thinks here of "the bit and bridle," rather than of the clear guidance of the Eye.²

Saint Paul at Troas suggests a picture which has been peculiarly fascinating to the classical imagination. The scene has been depicted by Dean Howson in a noble passage too long to quote, but which should by all means be referred to.³ We are reminded of Saint Peter at Joppa; only, instead of the waste of waters, there is a narrow strait and beyond it a pleasant land lying in clear sunlight — the island of Tenedos — which seems a stepping-stone to Europe. "Can it be that the Spirit of the Lord is calling us to cross the Ægean?" While the light lasted he thought, and when the night fell he slept and dreamed — of a man from the other shore, beckoning and saying, "Come over and help us." So, next day, Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus had taken ship, and with them another, too modest even to mention in his history that the party is increased, the fact betraying itself, however, in the change of the pronoun from "they" to "we," an indication that "the beloved physician" has joined the little missionary band.

2. MACEDONIA. Philippi, the scene of a decisive battle which nearly a century before had transformed the Roman republic into the empire, was a strong military post, representing the majesty of Rome in the province of Macedonia; for such is the import of the, to us, somewhat misleading, term "a colony." Here the apostle commenced his European labors. The port of landing had been Neapolis; but according to his invariable custom Saint Paul made straight for the populous center. His object was not merely to gain converts but to occupy positions of strategic importance, with a view to the ultimate conquest of the land for Christ. A walk of eight miles along a well-made Roman road would bring the four men to the city.

They took a few days to rest and reconnoitre, but found no synagogue in the place. The sabbath day came round, but there was no sign of sabbath worship. We can fancy how lonely they would feel, how completely out of touch with the life of the place until, having explored the streets in vain, they went outside the gate and found by the river side a little band of women worshiping the God of Israel. Gladly did they join the company, and tell their story; and before the service was over a loving heart and a hospitable home were opened to the Lord Christ and his ambassadors. The conversion of Lydia was the first fruit of the European mission.

¹ II. Timothy i, 5, iii, 15.

² Psalm xxxii, 8, 9.

³ Conybeare and Howson, Vol. I, viii.

Another woman of a very different type was the occasion of the visitors attracting more attention than they desired. They were proceeding with their work in the quiet way in which they had begun, attending the meetings by the river side and gathering converts by slow degrees. But one day, as they were making their way to the place of prayer, they were followed by a well-known wild woman of the place who was reputed to have "a spirit of divination." She had probably been a listener to the preaching of the Word, and excited by the apostle's ardor and catching up some of his phrases she was carried away by a sort of frenzied impulse to follow them, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, which proclaim unto you the way of salvation." The apostle, having no relish for such an advertisement and touched with compassion for the poor woman, was "sore troubled." For many days he had to bear it, no doubt lifting up his heart continually for guidance, until at last he felt authorized by his Master to speak the word of power in his name; and the woman was restored to perfect sanity.

But now her masters were to be reckoned with. She was of no more use to them, and what right had these foreigners to ruin their business? So they laid hold on Paul and Silas and brought them before the magistrates on a charge—not of casting out the evil spirit—that would not have been an offense against the Roman law—but of troubling the city and introducing new customs at variance with the use and wont of Rome. Naturally enough the mob sided with the masters against the foreigners, and such a tumult was made that the magistrates were fain, without waiting for the course of Roman justice, to take summary proceedings. They were but a couple of wandering Jews, and what harm would it do to give them a beating and put them in gaol for a night? So the shameful torture was inflicted, and the two men, bruised and bleeding, were thrust into a dark, foul dungeon, the jailor with gratuitous aggravation wedging their feet into the stocks.

"But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them." So they too rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name. Comments innumerable have been made on this inspiring scene, but perhaps none more beautiful than that of the Latin Father Tertullian: "That gloomy prison was to them what the desert was to the prophets—a holy retreat; one of those solitary places in which by preference Christ reveals his glory to his disciples. While their body was in fetters, their soul, sublimely free in spite of grating doors and guarded passages, was pressing on the way to God. The flesh feels no ill, when the spirit is in heaven."

Then comes the earthquake; and the jailor's suicidal alarm, allayed by the kindly words of the apostle, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here;" the eager question, "What must I do to be saved?" with the prompt reply, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house;" and the joyful change in the jailor's heart and home, making another holy household in the faith like that of Lydia, the result the same though the method and manner so strangely different—the one a gentle opening of the heart as to the dawning light, the other a terrible convulsion which laid the old life in ruins to make room for the new man in Christ Jesus.

It is a most thrilling story, very distasteful to the rationalistic critics as indicating so strongly the divine Hand in the history, but happily it is specially authenticated, for it is one of the "we sections," with all the marks of the report of an eyewitness. And here, as elsewhere, all research into the antiquities of the empire and of Philippi confirm the references to the state of matters in this Roman colony even to the minutest detail. There is no series of events in the book more thoroughly attested than the doings, and sufferings, and triumphs of Paul and Silas at Philippi.

Next day the magistrates, realizing how unjustly they had treated the poor men, sent to have them set at liberty; but they had yet to learn what manner of men they were whom

they had so "shamefully entreated." "Paul said unto them, They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison; and do they now cast us out privily? Nay, verily; but let them come themselves and bring us out." They did come, and asked them as a favor to move quietly away, which they were quite willing to do, for the work had been so well begun that Luke could be trusted to carry it on, while the two leaders with Timothy passed on to the next great center of population 100 miles to the west. True ever to his unconquerable modesty, Saint Luke says nothing of the difficult task assigned him; we only gather it from another change in the pronoun from "we" back to "they."

We shall have occasion to speak of the Epistle to the Philippians when we reach the place where it was written, but we may refer to it now to call attention to the proof it affords of the faithfulness and steadfastness of the converts who were the first fruits of the apostle's European harvest. Bishop Lightfoot, in the introduction to his invaluable commentary on the epistle, says: "The unwavering loyalty of his Philippian converts is the constant solace of the apostle in his manifold trials, the one bright ray of happiness piercing the dark clouds which gather ever thicker about the evening of his life. They are his joy and crown, his brethren beloved and eagerly desired."¹ From them only he consents to receive alms for the relief of his personal wants. To them only he writes in language unclouded by any shadow of displeasure or disappointment.

The experience of Paul and Silas at the next two places — Thessalonica and Berea — was so similar to that of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, in Pisidia, and Iconium that we shall not dwell on it, but pass on to the visit to Athens which is so full of interest that we must study it with care. Let it only be noted as we pass that though, by the machinations of his jealous countrymen, and the violence of the rabble, he was driven from both Thessalonica and Berea, it was not till the foundations had been laid of a noble spiritual temple, and the word of the Gospel had been so effectually lodged in many faithful hearts that he was able afterward to write to the Thessalonians: "Ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost; so that ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you hath sounded forth the Word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth."²

3. ACHAIA: ATHENS, CORINTH. Victory in defeat might have been the apostle's motto throughout his wonderful campaigns. "It is enough for the servant that he be as his Master;" and had not he found the defeat of the cross the only path to his victory of love? "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." So we find the apostle, in city after city, repeating in miniature the experience of the Christ: welcomed by a few, listened to by many, then contradicted and opposed by those in high position among the Jews, the fickle people turned against him, and the Roman authorities called in to set the law in motion for his overthrow, and the end — in the case of the Master, death; in the case of the servant, ignominious expulsion from the place. But even when he fled for his life, it was with a certain consciousness of victory, as having finished the work his Lord had given him to do, and laid, in sorrow and pain, the foundation of the Church that was to be. Thus, as he put it to the Colossians, he filled up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake which is the Church.³

Though the apostle had to fly in secret from the Macedonian province, it was not without taking with him some trophies of his victory; for what meant that escort from the Berean Church? Think how great a thing it was that converts of a few weeks' standing at most should show themselves so self-sacrificing, and so devoted to their spiritual father, as to be willing to

¹ Lightfoot, "Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians," p. 58.

³ Colossians i, 24.

² I. Thessalonians i, 6-8 (Revised Version).



RAPHAEL

PAUL AND BARNABAS REFUSING THE SACRIFICE AT LYSTRA.

take that long journey of 500 miles — 250 each way — the first twenty by land and the rest by sea, in order to see their teacher safe to his next field of work. It is told so simply that the ordinary reader is apt to miss the force of it. "They that conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens"—less than two lines: but read between them, think of the distance, the fatigue, the expense, the danger, the sacrifice of time; and the lines expand into a volume.

The voyage was through splendid scenery, and the first sight of the world's intellectual capital must have been thrilling to a man like Saint Paul, who, though learned chiefly in rabbinical lore, had yet given some study to the poets and philosophers of Greece. But "this one thing I do" was his motto, and "this one thing I tell" was the motto of his recorder; so we have not a word to show what appreciation the voyagers may have had of the beauties of nature presented to the eye or the wonders of history suggested to the mind. And when the apostle took his first walk through the city and saw the innumerable statues of the Greek divinities, so multiplied at every turn as to give point to the witticism of the Roman satirist that in Athens gods were more plentiful than men, it was not the glory of art that filled his mind, but the shame of idolatry: "his spirit was provoked within him as he saw the city full of idols."

He seems to have felt lonely and sad when the Berean brethren left him. This we gather from his earnest request that Silas and Timothy, who had been left behind in Macedonia, should be asked to come forward as soon as possible, and from the pathos of an expression in the Epistle to the Thessalonians where he speaks of being "left in Athens alone" with something of the same feeling in the wilderness of gods as is suggested by the words "alone in London," in a wilderness of men. This feeling of isolation would be only increased by the want of interest on the part of the few Jews he found in the synagogue. They seemed to receive his reasoning with true Athenian indifference, having probably caught so much of the spirit of the place as to weaken, if not to dispel, the religious earnestness which for the most part was characteristic of the Hebrew race. So the apostle turned from the synagogue to the Agora, much frequented by the schools of philosophy. There he found a certain interest, but of a very languid kind. The Epicureans and Stoics had sufficient intellectual curiosity to be willing to hear what the stranger had to say; but in the absence of all sense of sin or feeling of need, how was it possible for them to understand the impassioned earnestness of such a man as Paul? "What would this babbler say?" yawns an Epicurean. "He seems to be a setter forth of strange gods," mutters a Stoic. "But it is something new at all events," says another, an Eclectic perhaps; "let us take him to the Areopagus, the proper place for all such questions to be discussed." So a congregation of typical Athenians gathers on Mars Hill; and Saint Paul begins his famous speech.

A condensed report is given, which is of great importance as affording a specimen of the manner in which the apostle presented the truth to a purely Gentile congregation, just as in the discourse in the synagogue at Antioch, in Pisidia, we had a specimen of his preaching to his countrymen.

The exordium is unhappily translated in our version as if the apostle had begun by an attack on Athenian superstition. The alternative translation in the margin of the Revised Version, which speaks of the men of Athens not as "too superstitious" but as "somewhat religious," is more in keeping with the general strain of the discourse; but the peculiar compound adjective in the original requires more than a single word to translate it. Alford renders it, "I perceive that in all things ye carry your religious veneration very far."

This respectful and, on the whole, appreciative introduction prepares the way for the reference he makes next to the objects of veneration which have attracted his attention as he has passed through the city—the temples, the statues, the altars. It is clear that, though stirred in spirit at the sight of so much idolatry, his search was not to find what he could most effectively

condemn, but rather to discover if there were anything which he could conscientiously commend. How easy it would have been for him to have made a fierce attack on their worship of Dionysius or Aphrodite! How hard it must have been to find anything at all which he could accept and use as a starting point from common ground! We can imagine him thinking of Athene, the purest and best of their divinities, and coming sorrowfully to the conclusion that, whatever good may have come to the Athenians from the feeling for beauty and grace which was associated with her worship, it would be hopeless to attempt to use a mere local goddess as any help toward realizing the great God who made the heavens and the earth. Mars would naturally be suggested to him by the place where they stood, and if he had wished to convict the Greeks of absurdity he had an excellent opportunity in the legend which gave it its name, which was that here the God Mars was tried for murdering a son of Neptune. The most hopeful of all the gods whose names were familiar to the people would have been Zeus; but, though some of the best of the philosophers and the most advanced of their poets had had conceptions of the supreme god of Olympus which were not altogether unworthy, Zeus was so degraded by the current mythology that no good use could be made of the popular faith in him. It must have been a most difficult task to find anything that would do; yet he does find it. As he goes on reading inscription after inscription, each one probably with associations more fatal to his purpose than the one before, at last his eye rests on a writing which he can use, for it is an inscription "To the Unknown God." This accordingly he makes his text, and on it he preaches a sermon of which this is the sum: "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

It is obvious, therefore, that instead of finding fault with the religious veneration expressed in their worship, he approved it so far; and not only so, but used it as a foundation on which to build, as a starting point from which he might lead them up to the truth after which they were blindly groping. To have held up their faith to ridicule and stigmatized it as mere superstition would have been to act the part of a destroyer; but he had too much of the spirit of his Master to do this. Like him he came not to destroy but to fulfill; and accordingly he recognizes that all these temples, and altars, and statues are expressions of the feeling after God to which he so beautifully refers in the course of his address,¹ a feeling after God which is not to be discouraged, not to be suppressed, but to be directed to its proper object and so fulfilled. Not only does he accept the spirit which prompted them to worship, but he recognizes that in some dim way, in dense ignorance, indeed, as groping in the dark, as feeling after God, if haply they may find him, it is God, the God who made the heaven and the earth, to whom their hearts are turned: "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

We have seen that he takes his text from a heathen altar; and it is interesting to observe that the only text he quotes is from a heathen poet. He does not begin by telling them that their Homer and Hesiod were all lies and nonsense, which they must utterly reject. It was after that fashion the Mohammedans were taught to force the Koran on the foreigners they sought to convert. All other books were worthless; for if they agreed with the Koran, they were unnecessary, and if they disagreed, they were bad. There is not a vestige of this spirit in the apostle. Filled as his soul was with the deepest reverence for the Hebrew Scriptures, he did not think it necessary to decry the literature of the heathen. It was not the book he was anxious about in the first place, but the truth it enshrined. The apostle, accordingly, here sets before his audience the great truths of which the Scriptures were full, but he does not support them with texts from the Scriptures; he appeals to the heart and conscience of the people; and when he has occasion to quote, he quotes from their own poets: "as certain also of your own poets have said, 'For we are also his offspring'." The reference is probably to the two Greek poets Aratus and Cleanthes, in the writings of both of whom this sentiment is found, the former

¹ Acts xvii, 27.

using the identical words which the apostle quotes. Now, consider what this implies. In the first place, the apostle had read these poets sympathetically, with a readiness to recognize and welcome anything in them that was good and true. But next and more particularly, in both poems the reference is, not to the God of the Old Testament, but to the Zeus of Greece. Can it be, then, that an inspired apostle quotes with approbation the saying of a heathen poet that we are all the offspring of Zeus? It is even so. And it is a good thing he was an inspired apostle; for, if anyone else had done it, there are many good Christian people who would have branded him as a heretic. Why should he dare to say any good thing of such gross heathenism as all intelligent persons know the worship of Zeus to have been? Yet the apostle was perfectly right, and only showed himself possessed of that large charity which the majority of Christian people are only reaching now after so many centuries of schooling. The feeling, indeed, is very much the same as that expressed by one of our own poets in the well-known lines :

“ Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,
Who have faith in God and Nature,
Who believe, that in all ages
Every human heart is human,
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings
For the good they comprehend not ;
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness
And are lifted up and strengthened ; —
Listen to this simple story,
To this song of Hiawatha ! ”

Observe, however, on the other hand that, while he is eminently charitable, he is thoroughly faithful. His spirit has been stirred within him as he has seen the city crowded with images, so repugnant to the soul of one of the nation to which had been given the law, the law of which this was one of the strongest clauses, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.” He must censure here, therefore. But how does he do it? Does he quote to them the second commandment, and then tell them that they are a set of wicked transgressors of the law? In no such spirit does he approach the subject. He knows that it is not denunciation but enlightenment they need ; so in the quietest and most natural way, not from the second commandment, not from the Hebrew Scriptures at all, but from their own poets' teaching, he leads them to the great truth of the spirituality of the Divine Being, and the duty, therefore, of spiritual worship : “Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man.” Then, still in the spirit of him who “satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the soul of the hungry with goodness,” he puts in place of the innumerable images of their innumerable gods, that Man ordained of God to be the Savior and the Judge of men, who is “the image of the invisible God,” “the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.”

Did the apostle preach Christ any less earnestly because he looked with such charitable eyes on the religion and literature of the Greeks? There are those who, as soon as they discover that heathen religions have their good points and have developed some good men, straightway infer that there is little or no need of preaching Christ. What would one think of a city missionary who would make the discovery of good points in many of the people of his district a reason for giving up his work? One would think it would be a great encouragement to him. It is the old wrong notion that the function of Christianity is to root up all the religion it finds in the world and plant itself upon the ruins. It is not religion with which we are at war, but irreligion and sin. There is always sin enough to destroy everywhere, and so

long as that remains true, there will be work enough for all the disciples of Christ; and it is so gigantic an undertaking that, instead of regretting to find that which makes for righteousness among the heathen, we should rejoice in it, and welcome it, feeling sure that whatever is good is of God, is part of that great light which has been diffused more or less all over the world, though it centers only in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is "the Sun of Righteousness." He has come to "fulfill the desire of them that fear him," and how great a thing it is to have a Gospel of fulfillment for all mankind, fulfillment of all that is pure, and high, and hopeful, with satisfaction of every hunger for God all the world over. Those who make the truth and goodness found among the heathen a reason for not preaching Christ to them are like engineers who, on surveying some country through which a canal is to be cut and finding here a lake and there a river, would report that it was of no use to proceed farther; if there had been a range of mountains they might have gone to work, but when so much was already done by nature, why trouble to do any more? The only objection to the illustration is, that engineers never report in that fashion; they have too much sense. They hail every cutting which they find ready made, utilize every little lake that lies in their way, and as a rule they find use enough for their picks and shovels after all!

This is, perhaps, too long a digression, and to be excused only by the importance of the occasion and the timeliness of the questions raised; but we must now return to our history. The apostle was not allowed to finish his address, for when he came to speak of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked and some said the sermon was too long. The indifference of the Athenian was a more fatal obstacle than the opposition of the Jew or the superstition of the barbarian. No church was founded, though the seeds of one were planted in the hearts of a very few, one of whom, Dionysius, was a member of the court of Areopagus. It is interesting to come across, in one of the Fathers of the second century, the statement that this Dionysius was the first bishop of the Church at Athens; and though this may have been conjecture, we do know that a church was established which showed something of the Athenian spirit of intellectual distinction, as furnishing from its membership the two earliest of the "apologists" for the faith—Quadratus and Aristides. All we know of the former is by a quotation from his apology by the historian, Eusebius; but the work of Aristides has been recently discovered,¹ and proves to be of great interest and value. The date is 124 A. D., and a strong argument for the apostolic date of Saint Luke's history has been built on the absence from the report of the speech at Athens of all traces of the thought which the new-found document proves to have been characteristic even of the early part of the second century.

The apostle was far more depressed by the small number of converts at Athens than he had been by all he had suffered in the cities of the north; and it was with a heavy heart that he set out alone—for his colleagues were all in Macedonia—for Corinth, the commercial metropolis of the Roman province of Achaia. "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling," he wrote afterward to the Corinthians in recalling the experience of that sorrowful time. But "the Lord is mindful of his own"; and from the day he entered the wealthy, wicked city one encouragement after another revived the spirit of the weary soldier of the cross.

First came the meeting with Aquila and Priscilla, Jews from Rome, banished by the decree of the Emperor Claudius, of which we read in the secular history of the period; Christians, too, it would seem; for, if their conversion had taken place after meeting with the apostle, the fact would surely have been noted. They were originally from Pontus, one of the countries specially mentioned as having its representatives at Jerusalem when Saint Peter preached his first sermon, so they may have been the fruits of that earliest work of all, or they may have been brought into the Church at Rome. It must have been a great joy to find these "like-minded"

¹ By Prof. Rendel Harris, in 1889.

ones in the large strange town, and all the more that, being of the same trade, he could cast in his lot with them, and find employment in their establishment. This coincidence discloses to us how the apostle provided "the sinews of war"; and from sundry references in the epistles,¹ we gather that he sometimes had difficulty enough in securing the bare necessities of life.

The next encouragement was the arrival of Silas and Timothy, for whose company he had been eagerly longing; and again we learn from the passage just referred to, and from another in his letter to the Philippians² that they were the bearers of a contribution from the Macedonian Christians. There were more reasons than one, therefore, why their arrival gave the new impulse to the work which is recorded in connection with their visit. But the fresh energy of the apostle only stirred the more the opposition of the Jews, so that he was driven out of the synagogue, and compelled to hold his meetings in the private house of one of the converts.

This new trial was relieved by fresh encouragement from above, a vision of his Master in the night, with this cheering message: "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city." Thus fortified he labored on, holding the difficult post for a year and a half, gathering many converts and establishing an important church notwithstanding the hardness of the field, for Corinth vied even with Antioch, in Syria, in its evil reputation for luxury and debauchery; so much so that the word "to Corinthianize" meant to be addicted to all sorts of vice.

His labors were not confined to the city, for we know from his letters that he carried his Gospel throughout the regions of Achaia, and we read of converts and even of churches in some of the neighboring towns. It was during this period, also, that he wrote his two earliest letters, both to the church at Thessalonica, which ought not only to be studied chapter by chapter for the instruction they convey, but also to be read through at a sitting as letters usually are read; and if we keep well in mind the circumstances under which they were written, we shall appreciate their deep pathos, and almost feel the beating of that noble heart.

In Corinth, as elsewhere, the attempt was made to set the law in motion against the apostle, and so secure his expulsion, but this was frustrated by the firmness of the Proconsul Gallio, a name well known in history, for he was the brother of the great Seneca, one of the purest and best of the Roman writers. His conduct on this occasion is quite in harmony with what is known of him from other sources.

So, from one city the apostle was permitted to depart in peace; and, as now three years have elapsed since he left home, he judges it time to return to Antioch and give in his report; which he does, after calling on the way back at Ephesus, and disembarking at Cæsarea for a flying visit to Jerusalem to pay his respects to the Mother Church.

¹ Especially II. Corinthians xi, 9.

² Philippians iv, 15.



THOMAS ALLOM

THYATIRA.

CHAPTER XV.

THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

“HAVING spent some time there, he departed”—this is all we are told of what passed at Antioch when the victorious general returned from his great campaign. Had he been a Roman general returning to the capital, he would have been received with all public honors, a great procession waiting for him at the city gates to escort him in, at its head the magistrates and senate, then trumpeters, trophies of the fights, white oxen with gilded horns garlanded for sacrifice, prisoners of war also destined for sacrifice as soon as the procession halted; in the center the general himself, riding in state in a magnificent chariot in robes of purple and gold, a golden crown held over his head by a slave whose duty it was to keep reminding him (the one redeeming feature of it all) that he was mortal; and in the rear the victorious army shouting *Io Triumphe*, while the whole city would resound with plaudits of joy. Nothing of this in Antioch; but something better, let us hope. “My kingdom is not of this world,” said the Master.

We are embarked on the third journey before we know it, for even the Revised Version fails to indicate its beginning by so much as a new paragraph.¹ Its objective point is Ephesus, chosen, as it would appear, because of what many would call the accident of the apostle’s visit on his homeward way. It is not likely that he would have embraced it in his programme then, seeing he had been at the beginning of that journey turned aside from preaching the Gospel in Asia; but, as his friends Aquila and Priscilla had to go there on business, he landed with them, and found a field so inviting as to give it a strong claim for his early consideration. We see here again, as so often, that the guidance given to the apostle does not differ essentially from that which is within the reach of all who are of like precious faith with him.

This journey begins, like the last one, with a visit, the third, to the churches of Galatia and Phrygia; but this is only noted in passing on to the center of interest. When Saint Paul reached Ephesus, he found the work already begun through the labors of a man of great ability who hailed from Alexandria—that great city, second only to Rome in size and importance, which Saint Paul seems to have avoided because it had a population so largely Jewish as to mark it out as the proper field for the Jerusalem Church, to which also it belonged geographically. Apollos of Alexandria was a disciple of John the Baptist, having received his baptism of repentance, and accepted his testimony to Jesus as the Messiah; but, living at such a distance from Jerusalem, he had been out of touch with Christ himself and his apostles, and so remained in ignorance of many things, especially the truths connected with the cross of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit. There were a few others, not more than twelve in all, in much the same position, whose presence in Ephesus may have been one of the attractions the city had for the Alexandrian orator. That he was earnest, and sincere, and open-minded is proved by his readiness, notwithstanding his superior education and position, to sit at the feet of these worthy tradespeople, Aquila and Priscilla, who “expounded to him the way of God more carefully.” He had gone to visit the Church at Corinth before Saint Paul arrived at Ephesus; but the little band of John’s disciples, prepared in part by the preaching of Apollos in the synagogue, at once received the full doctrine of Christ, and became the first fruits of the apostle’s harvest in the Asian capital.

This was a most encouraging beginning, but the experience in the synagogue was as disappointing as ever; for, after three months’ labor he was obliged, as before at Corinth, to abandon

¹ Acts xviii, 23.



MAP OF THE MISSIONARY TOURS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

Scale of Miles.

0 50 100 150 200 250 300

First

Second

Third

Fourth Tours

it, and find another place of meeting, not a private house this time, but "the school of Tyrannus," where he labored steadily on for two years, not alone in Ephesus, but taking evangelistic tours, so that "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." No details are given, and the Epistle to the Ephesians does not help us here, for it is so taken up with the highest things that there is no room in it for those personal allusions which abound in some of the other letters; but we can gather something of the nature of the work from the farewell address to the elders of the Church. From this we learn that, while his own hands ministered to his necessities, and though sorely tried by the plots of the Jews, he "ceased not to admonish everyone night and day with tears"; teaching not only publicly but from house to house, and showing by his example how to help the weak and be generous to the poor.

During this time, also, the affairs of the Church at Corinth gave him much uneasiness. The visit of Apollos had done much good, and his eloquent preaching had attracted many; but Satan had been busy sowing tares among the wheat, taking occasion of the popularity of Apollos to stir up party feeling, so much so that some said, "we are of Paul," and others "we are of Apollos." To make matters worse, the party of bigotry in Jerusalem had sent its emissaries to discredit the Apostle of the Gentiles if possible, and, in spite of him, to enforce the ordinances of the Jewish law upon the Christian people, and they, too, gained their followers whose cry was, "we are of Cephas," while still others, instead of trying to heal the breach, made it worse by constituting a fourth party, taking the name of Christ as a distinctive badge. The result was chaos and spiritual decline, the growth of grave disorders and abuses, even the sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper desecrated, while there were sad cases of immorality in practice and on the part of some a serious denial of vital doctrines. What distraction and distress must all this have brought to the apostle in the midst of his great work at Ephesus; but again what a gain has it been to the Church in the possession of those priceless Epistles to the Corinthians of which there seem to have been three, the first one lost to us, the second our First Epistle written from Ephesus, and the third our Second Epistle written afterward from Macedonia! Many of the questions raised were of passing interest, but the principles laid down in dealing with them are of eternal obligation, and their clear statement of perpetual value; and are not the discords of the Corinthian parties more than compensated by the glorious panegyric of love which still sings on its heavenly melody, when their jarring voices have long passed into the silence?¹ and is not the Epicurean denial of the resurrection far more than counterbalanced by that majestic epic of the life to come which still, every day of the year throughout all Christendom, brings heaven down to the darkened room and the opening grave?²

Towards the close of the third year's work in Ephesus there was a series of events of so much exciting interest that it is given in full detail, with such wealth of local color that we can point to the record as almost a demonstration that it is no secondhand report of a later age, but the testimony of one who was living at the time and quite familiar with the place. This was amply illustrated by the earlier writers;³ but recent discoveries, especially the excavations⁴ on the site and in the neighborhood of ancient Ephesus, have given additional confirmations of the minute accuracy of our historian. It is impossible in our space to do anything like justice to the large subject, but reference may be made to the full treatment of it by Professor Stokes of Dublin.⁵ We can attempt little more here than a bare enumeration of the principal points.

That Ephesus was a favorite haunt of such strolling exorcists as the seven sons of Sceva the Jew, who tried to make a talismanic use of the name of Jesus, is abundantly proved; and, as the emperor had recently expelled the magicians as well as the Jews (and many of the

¹ I. Corinthians xiii.² I. Corinthians xv.³ Notably Conybeare, and Howson, and Mr. Lewin.⁴ Made by Mr. J. T. Wood.⁵ Commentary on the Acts in "The Expositor's Bible," and articles in the *Sunday at Home*, for 1891-2.

magicians were Jews) from Rome, a large center of population like Ephesus was the more likely to be infested with them. We can quite readily see, then, how the attempt would be made to rival the apostles as workers in the spiritual sphere, and how the humiliation of the imposters and the triumph of the apostle would naturally lead to the impressive scene of the burning of the great pile of books of magic by the disillusioned people.

As was to be expected, such a demonstration would cause "no small stir concerning the Way." So long as the work went quietly on, the great city would pay little heed; but when the new doctrine began to tell on a large scale, and books of magic were burnt, and silver shrines thrown aside as useless things, there would be excitement and alarm; and an interested person like Demetrius, the silversmith, would have the opportunity of which he so skillfully availed himself. It so happens, however, that the incidental reference to the apostle's plans,¹ taken in connection with certain passages in his epistles, fixes the precise time of the year, and shows it to have been the very month which we know from other sources was given up by the Ephesians to a series of festivities in honor of the great goddess Diana, during which the large populous district round about flowed into Ephesus and made it for the time a Vanity Fair. How natural, almost inevitable one might say, under these circumstances, the disturbance and excitement caused by the harangue of Demetrius.

Among the discoveries made at Ephesus are inscriptions which make pointed reference to this business of making shrines for Diana, and show how extensive it was; and, curiously enough, it has been found that there was less exaggeration than might have been supposed in the statement made in the silversmith's speech that "all Asia and the world worshiped" the goddess; for these shrines and similar objects of veneration have been found at different points on the Mediterranean shore even as far west as Spain. The cry "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" has been deciphered on many inscriptions, not in the ruins of Ephesus only, but all over the region of which it was the center.

There is the same accuracy here as elsewhere in the use of the local official titles. The Asiarchs² have been found to be officials specially appointed to preside over these festivities, and it shows how far-reaching the apostle's influence had been that some of these were so well disposed to him as to beg him not to go into the theater while the excitement lasted. Remains of the theater, too, have been discovered, as well as of the magnificent temple. Another new title of office appears in the town clerk, who quieted the multitude with his judicious speech, and, again, there are inscriptions in which this very official is mentioned; and, moreover, the peculiar word used by the town clerk to denote the relation of the city to the goddess, the word translated "temple-keeper" in the Revised Version, has also been found on inscriptions in the same connection. These may serve as specimens of the minute correspondence between the details of the record and the testimony of the recently disinterred witnesses.

It is interesting, also, to find in the town clerk's speech a proof that the apostle showed the same charitable spirit at Ephesus as he had manifested at Athens. There are those who have suggested that the apostle made a mistake at Athens, which he afterward corrected at Corinth, in being too liberal in his views toward the Greek worship; but it is surely sufficient evidence that he was still of the same spirit, that, after the Gospel had been preached for nearly three years in the place, the town clerk should be able to say, "these men are neither robbers of temples, nor blasphemers of our goddess."

Before leaving Ephesus it may be well to notice the remarkable fact that just here, where, as at Philippi, the occurrences are of the kind that offend the anti-supernaturalists, there should again be special confirmation of the truth of the record.

The rest of the journey is given for the most part in mere outline. It embraces (1) *a tour in Macedonia* with the addition of a circuit as far as Illyricum,³ during which time was written,

¹ Acts xix, 21, 22.

² See Revised Version, margin.

³ Romans xv, 19.



MOUNT CERESUS, EPHEBUS.

as already noticed, the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, addressed also to "the saints which are in the whole of Achaia," and, therefore, including the Athenians — an epistle which gives us an affecting glimpse into the apostle's burdened heart at the time the troubles at Corinth were weighing very heavily upon him; (2) *a visit to Greece*, three months being spent in Corinth, from which, in addition to all the labors he had in putting matters right in the Church, he found time to write the Epistles to the Galatians and to the Romans, weighty treatises both of them, the latter a work of transcendent importance, though Renan perhaps puts it too strongly when he speaks of it as having in it "the whole future of Christian theology"; and (3) *the return homeward*, not by direct sea-route, which was rendered impossible for him by the plots of the Jews, but back over land by way of Macedonia again, where he kept the Passover at Philippi; Troas, where took place the restoration of Eutychus; Miletus, the scene of the affecting parting with the elders of the Ephesian Church; Tyre, where the disciples implored him not to risk his life in Jerusalem; and Cæsarea, where he met Philip the Evangelist, and was again entreated by the brethren, warned by the prophet Agabus, and besought by his own companions not to go up to the feast, and gave for answer these impressive words: "What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

It will be observed by the careful reader that from Philippi onward the homeward journey is told with much more detail than the previous portions; and the reason of this will appear in the silent change of pronoun again from "they" to "we." The first person was dropped at Philippi on the last journey, and not resumed till now, an indication that Saint Luke had been left by the apostle in charge there, and did not rejoin him till he passed on his homeward way in the third journey.

Those who follow the route on the map will see that this journey, though told in so brief a space, covered immense distances, and the mere fatigue and exposure meant not a little in the way of hardship. But when we add to this all the labors, the sufferings, the distractions, the painful controversy with Judaizers then at its height, the letters and treatises, the collection made for the poor saints in Judea, with all the precautions taken to keep the accounts and money transactions as clear as day, the care of all the churches pressing upon him, the prayers for them all which were never intermitted, and the great plans for the future for carrying the Gospel next to Rome and then on to Spain — when we think of all this, we do not so much admire the man — that would be quite at variance with his thought and wish — as join those who made his heart glad because he could say of them, "they glorified God in me."

It is important, also, to bear in mind that we have in the Acts only specimens of the perils, privations, and sufferings he underwent. A striking proof of this is found in the enumeration of these, which, under the pressure of the fierce opposition to his claim to be an apostle, he gives in the Epistle to Corinth he wrote from Macedonia: "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is made to stumble, and I burn not?"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PRISONER OF THE LORD.

THE third journey ended at Jerusalem. It was no doubt the apostle's intention, had the way been clear, to return to Antioch as before and give in his third report; but the forebodings of danger which darkened as he approached the capital were only too fully realized; and it is doubtful if he ever saw Antioch again.

Why was he so determined to go up to Jerusalem? We cannot suppose, his views being what they were, that he thought it necessary, as a mere matter of compliance with the law, to be present at the pentecostal feast. It must be remembered, however, that his controversy with the Judaizing teachers who professed to represent the Mother Church was then at its height, and that there was danger, real and imminent, of so complete a rupture between Jerusalem and Antioch — between Jew and Gentile — that a new wall of partition would be erected between them far worse than the old, for that had served a good purpose in its time, whereas this would be “only evil, and that continually.” This would have meant the rending of the Church in twain and the ruin of his work. At all costs, therefore, Saint Paul must heal the breach; and how could this labor of love be more hopefully undertaken than by the Apostle of the Gentiles going himself to the Mother Church, taking brotherly counsel with Cephas and with James, and coming, if possible, to a full understanding with the brethren there? He must go to Jerusalem, whatever betide.

All this gives a deeply pathetic interest to his unyielding firmness. It seemed to everyone else as if he were throwing his life away. All the brethren on the route besought him not to go, the earnestness deepening as the capital was approached; all his traveling companions joined them in the pleading; his own heart was full of foreboding; and when to all this was added the solemn warning of an acknowledged prophet of the Church, what strenuousness of resolve, what clearness of conviction, and what splendid courage must there have been to enable him to resist and to persist! It was no stubbornness of will, it was no disregard of his brethren's pleading; it was a heart-break to refuse their affectionate entreaty: “What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart?” But the old question — old yet ever new to him — “Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do?” had been so distinctly answered in this case that, though he must disappoint brethren, fellow-laborers, an honored prophet of the Church, and the pleading of his own heart, he must obey, must follow his Master who in his day had to “set his face steadfastly to go up to Jerusalem,” though he knew that he “must suffer many things of the chief priests, and elders, and scribes and be killed.” Had he turned at Tyre, or at Cæsarea, we should have had a *Domine quo vadis* of Saint Paul. The last rendering of this striking legend of Saint Peter by Mr. William Watson tempts one to refer to it more particularly. Saint Peter was sorely beset with entreaties of the same kind as those used to move Saint Paul from his purpose. For a time he strenuously resisted, quite in the spirit of the Apostle of the Gentiles, but when one after another of his flock tearfully besought him, for the sake of his sheep whom he loved so much, and who could not spare their shepherd, to save his life by flight, he at last allowed himself to be persuaded that duty called him to the path of prudence, and so turned his steps from Rome and from the persecution raging there; when

“Lo, on the darkness brake a wandering ray:
A vision flashed along the Appian Way.
Divinely in the pagan night it shone —
A mournful Face — a Figure hurrying on —

Tho' haggard and disheveled, frail and worn,
 A king of David's lineage, crowned with thorn.
 'Lord, whither farest?' Peter, wondering, cried;
 'To Rome,' said Christ, 'to be re-crucified.'

"Into the night the vision ebbed like breath.
 And Peter turned, and rushed on Rome, and death."

Saint Paul had had his vision, and so was able to answer the last entreaties as he had answered the first, with such calmness and "clear settled will" that even the prophet Agabus recognized that, true as his warning was, another summons was ringing clear above it, so that they must cease, and say "the will of the Lord be done."

This part of the history may be best studied by dividing it into three portions, which may be marked by the three cities in which in succession the apostle was imprisoned: Jerusalem, Cæsarea, Rome.

1. *At Jerusalem.* It must have been with no little misgiving that Saint Paul reported himself to the brethren at Jerusalem. Was it possible that there might be more truth than he allowed himself to believe in the representations of the Judaizers? Was it possible that Saint Peter had not been able to forgive the strong words he had felt it his duty to speak at Antioch? Might it be that he and James had resiled from the position they had taken up at the council and allowed themselves to be brought into bondage again to the beggarly elements? All this was quite possible; therefore it must have been an immense relief to be welcomed at all and listened to with sympathetic interest as he told the story of his work at Ephesus and in the West. Saint Luke makes no mention of the way in which the alms were received, from which Archdeacon Farrar draws the conclusion, perhaps correctly, that there was not as much gratitude shown as there ought to have been, and certainly they seemed to have been in haste to remind him of the very strong prejudice against him, and rather disposed to exaggerate the number of believing Jews who remained zealous for the law. Be that as it may, they strongly recommended, in order to remove or allay the prejudice, that he should take on himself a charge, the observance of which by King Agrippa, as we learn from Josephus, had recently won him golden opinions among the strictest of the Jews. As the doing of this involved no sacrifice of principle, seeing that it was done by him simply as a Jew, and not at all as a Christian, he complied, associated himself with the four men of whom the brethren had spoken as about to take the Nazarite vow, so far at least as to undertake the expense of it on their behalf. The question has been raised as to whether this compliance was worthy of him; and we do not wonder that such a stern and uncompromising controversialist as Knox should severely condemn it, or that some of those modern critics, who are ever on the watch for some excuse for their unbelief, should represent it as incredible that a man of such spirit should do it at all; but when we bear in mind what the apostle himself says as to the principles on which he acted, we can see not only that it was credible that he should so act, but that, from the highest point of view, it was creditable, not to say magnanimous. It may be well to quote the very words he uses: "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak; I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the Gospel's sake."¹ Had it been to secure his own safety, it would have been entirely different; but from the spirit he showed throughout, this is altogether out of the question. It was for the sake of Christ and his Gospel that he subjected himself to what must have been a humiliation.

¹ I. Corinthians ix, 20-23 (Revised Version).

The feeling which had been aroused among the foreign Jews, especially those from the region of Ephesus, where, in spite of their opposition, the Gospel had made great progress, was so great that not only did this compliance fail to allay it, but it actually afforded the occasion for an outbreak of hostility which resulted in his imprisonment. For, toward the end of the seven days needed for the completion of the vow, some of the Asiatic Jews, recognizing him, raised a hue and cry, and accused him of bringing Greeks into the Temple, so defiling "this holy place." Immediately a tumult was raised, and the fury of the mob was such that the apostle would have been torn in pieces had not the captain of the Roman guard, stationed in the tower of Antonia which commanded the Temple area, seen the disturbance and called out the cohort to suppress it. Finding that Paul was the object of their rage he arrested him, so as to ascertain the cause of the tumult. The Jews had, of course, to keep their hands off the apostle when he was in the custody of the soldiers, but they still kept crowding and pushing after him with the same angry shouts which nearly thirty years before had rung on Calvary, and the apostle conceived the bold resolution of addressing them. He had faced many a hostile audience before, and he was not afraid even of this one. A few words in Greek with the chief captain secured the favor he asked, and, standing on the staircase, he stretched forth his hand as if to make a speech to them. This awakened their curiosity, so that "there was made a great silence," on which would break with winning power the familiar accents of the mother tongue, suggesting, perhaps, that this advocate of Gentiles was more of a genuine Hebrew than they had supposed.

The speech on the stairs is quite characteristic of the man. It was a brave and manly utterance from first to last, and yet so skillful in its presentation of his case that he carried the hearers with him while he told them of his early training as a Rabbi, his persecuting zeal, the great crisis of his life when he recognized the Messiah, his anxiety to stay among his brethren, and the peremptory orders he had received through a vision in the Temple to leave his beloved country and go "far off to the Gentiles." "They gave him audience unto this word"; and, had they been at all true to their own Scriptures, they would have waited to hear what he would have presently explained, that all this was in fulfillment of the high calling of their privileged nation; but prejudice and intolerance were so strong, that at the bare suggestion of any Gospel for the Gentiles, they broke into wild fury with all the extravagances in which Eastern mobs are wont to express their rage, throwing off their garments, casting dust in the air, and shouting, "away with such a fellow from the earth." The chief captain, not understanding the Hebrew tongue, could have no idea what it was all about; and, thinking he had made a great mistake in granting any indulgence to such a firebrand, and that he ought rather to atone for his leniency by rushing to the other extreme of severity, ordered him to be examined by torture. With the same calmness he had shown throughout, the apostle quietly claimed his right as a Roman, and again as at Philippi secured more respectful treatment. By this time the chief captain had become quite convinced that not civil but religious questions were involved in the case, and accordingly called the Sanhedrim together, hoping that they might be able to dispose of it.

In the appearance of Saint Paul before the Sanhedrim we see human nature more in evidence than on any previous occasion since his conversion. It was a very trying position to be in. He had been one of themselves, and now he was a prisoner at the bar; and when, having begun his speech with a clear consciousness of the purity of his motives and the rectitude of his whole course, he was interrupted by the cowardly insult of a blow on the mouth at the order of the high priest, we need not wonder if the rising of temper in so fiery a nature betrayed him into language which certainly contrasts with the quiet dignity of his Master on a similar occasion. But it certainly is uncharitable to suggest that, besides hot temper in his answer to the figure in white which had given the brutal order, there was also untruth in his statement

that he did not know it was the high priest. The whole thing would pass in less time than it takes to tell it—an unknown voice, a sudden blow, a swift retort—it was surely far more likely than not, under such circumstances, that he should have to be told it was the high priest who had provoked his indignation; and it was quite natural and altogether worthy of the gentleman and the Christian that, on learning who it was, and remembering the Scripture, “thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people,” he should have made a dignified apology. But whether the incident had thrown him off his balance, or whether the temptation to exert his strategic powers was too great for him, it must be acknowledged that there seems not only much of the wisdom but some of the wile of the serpent in his suddenly throwing an apple of discord into the council by claiming to be a Pharisee, and to be in the position of having to answer for believing in the resurrection of the dead. Both statements were true in their terms, but neither was relevant to the occasion; and, as Archdeacon Farrar points out, his acknowledgment before the tribunal of Felix¹ showed “a certain sense of compunction for the method in which he had extricated himself from a pressing danger.”

The shell had the desired effect. It made an explosion; and, amid the noise and dust of it, the chief captain removed his prisoner and consigned him again to the castle. There he would have time to review the events of the day; and who can tell what of self-condemnation there would be in his meditations? If there were, and if he humbled himself in the dust before his Lord for not having followed him as closely as he might that day, we can understand how the Lord, in his forgiving love, would grant him one of those manifestations which were once and again his solace in times of special depression: “the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.” The whole circumstances suggest such an experience as that which Mr. Myers, in his striking poem “Saint Paul,” seems to have in his mind in the following verses:

“Nay, but much rather let me late returning,
Bruised of my brethren, wounded from within,
Stoop with sad countenance and blushes burning,
Bitter with weariness and sick with sin,—

“Then as I weary me and long and languish,
Nowise availing from that pain to part,—
Desperate tides of the whole great world’s anguish
Forced thro’ the channels of a single heart,—

“Straight to thy presence get me and reveal it,
Nothing ashamed of tears upon thy feet,
Show the sore wound and beg thy hand to heal it,
Pour thee the bitter, pray thee for the sweet.

“Then with a ripple and a radiance thro’ me
Rise and be manifest, O Morning Star!
Flow on my soul, thou Spirit, and renew me,
Fill with thyself and let the rest be far.”

2. *At Cæsarea.* The cheering vision of the night was much needed, for in the morning a visit from his nephew made him acquainted with a plot of forty sworn assassins, of the secret of which the young man had in some unknown way become possessed. A prompt message to the chief captain frustrated the conspiracy, for Claudius Lysias at once ordered a midnight march to convey his prisoner to Cæsarea, that he might no longer be the occasion of disturbance in Jerusalem, but be dealt with at leisure by the governor, Felix. Again it will be observed, we read of “the governor” as in the days of our Lord, for on the death of “Herod, the king,” the

¹ Acts xxiv, 21.



CAESAREA PHILIPPI.

Emperor Claudius had restored the procuratorship, this Felix being the fourth who had held office since the change.

The lapse of five days sufficed to bring the accusers to Cæsarea. They had engaged as counsel for the prosecution an orator who with true professional skill presented a charge, the one item of truth in which was that the prisoner had been "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes." Saint Paul was as usual his own advocate, and after a respectful introduction gave a straightforward account of his object in visiting Jerusalem, and of how he had spent the short time he was there. The charge made by Renan that "it was a skillful apology, clever rather than sincere," seems without a shadow of foundation. The apostle candidly acknowledged what was true in the charge: "this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers," and though he repeats his conviction of a resurrection, he does so with no sinister purpose this time, and even acknowledges that the use he had made of that point in the address before the Sanhedrim might be put under the head of "wrong doing." Felix was not ignorant of the sect of the Nazarenes, and what he had heard of them had awakened his interest; but it would not have been good policy to give judgment against so influential a deputation from the Temple; so he adopted the safe course of adjourning the trial.

Drusilla, now the wife of Felix, though her lawful husband was still living, was a sister of the second Herod Agrippa, and was, therefore, a Jewess, and presumably interested in the case. It was natural that she should wish to meet with a man of whose strange doings she had heard not a little, and Felix, sharing her curiosity, took occasion to gratify it by summoning his prisoner and asking him to tell them about this Messiah whom he was proclaiming throughout the world. How the apostle responded is well worthy of note. No one could be more eager than he to preach Christ and him crucified, and to tell of the forgiveness of sins freely offered in his name; but, knowing well the character of his auditors, he dared not speak smooth things to them; he must lead them to Sinai before he could show them Calvary; so he "reasoned with them of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." When it is remembered that the apostle's fate was in the hands of this pair, and that he knew them to be unrighteous, unchaste, and living in defiance of the judgment of God, one must admire the noble courage of the man, his absolute faithfulness, his utter self-forgetfulness. Strange that Renan, so ready to imagine insincerity in the apostle's defense, should not have a word of appreciation here! His sole remark is the half-jesting one, "the subjects were not altogether agreeable to these new catechumens." It gives some idea of the power with which the apostle spoke that a man like Felix, hardened from his earliest years in all kinds of sin, as we know from Tacitus and other independent sources, trembled, and again, as in the court, took the refuge of weakness in delay. Afraid to settle it one way or another, he put it off and—went on in sin. The impression made by the first hearing of Paul seems to have faded away at once, for the hardened sinner found it in his heart to play with the prisoner, seeing him again and again, not with any desire to know the way of life, but in the hope that he might extort a bribe from those well-to-do Nazarenes in the West who had contributed so liberally to the poor Christians in Jerusalem. So two years slowly passed till Felix was recalled, and Porcius Festus installed in his place.

We have no record of these two years; but it is unlikely that Saint Paul should have been content to spend so long a time without writing to any of the churches which were all so near his heart. It is doubtful, however, if any of his extant epistles can be traced to Cæsarea. Many able scholars, among whom are Sabatier and Pressensé, have assigned the epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon to this period; but the weight of evidence seems to be in favor of the opinion which now prevails that all these, as well as the Epistle to the Philippians, were written during the first Roman imprisonment. There may have been other letters, however, which have not been preserved; and it seems highly probable that Saint Luke composed his Gospel at this time under the apostle's guidance. We may be sure, however, in any case, that

the time was not lost, that, even if no other purpose were served, the experience in Cæsarea of the difficult service of those "who only stand and wait" must have contributed much toward that mellowing of tone and enrichment of spirit which prepared the prisoner of the Lord for leaving to the Church universal that marvelous group of letters which by general consent are reckoned the high-water mark of his spiritual power.

It was in August, 60 A. D., that Festus arrived in Cæsarea as Roman Procurator. One of his first duties was to go up to Jerusalem and get into touch with the Temple magnates; and the first demand they made of him was that their enemy Paul, so long detained by Felix, should be given up to them. This he was not unwilling to do; but, having some sense of justice, he decided to give the prisoner first an opportunity of confronting his accusers in open court. At the new trial in Cæsarea there was no professional orator, as on the last occasion, to lay the case before the governor; and the witnesses brought forward their charges in so excited and confused a way that Festus, seeing it was not a political but a religious question, began to think the only way to settle the case was to let it be tried at Jerusalem; but, as nothing had been proved against the prisoner, he put it to him whether he were not himself willing to go there. The apostle knew only too well what to expect if he got into the clutches of his unscrupulous foes, though probably he did not know that there was actually a plot on foot to assassinate him on the way up. He did not hesitate, therefore, to claim his right as a Roman citizen, in words showing a spirit of manliness which the two years of imprisonment had in no way weakened, "I am standing before Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also very well knowest. If, then, I am a wrongdoer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if none of those things is true, whereof these accuse me, no man can give me up unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar." After a short consultation, the validity of the appeal, against which nothing could be said, was admitted: "Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar: unto Cæsar shalt thou go."

We can fancy the exultation of the apostle in the prospect of seeing Rome at last. Had there been any hope of liberation he would no doubt have preferred to have gone as the free apostle of the Lord, and made it the center of a fourth missionary tour; but since all hope of this seemed now at an end, he was quite content to go as "the prisoner of the Lord." It would be with all eagerness he would wait for news of a ship and the order to embark; but meantime another opportunity is given him of bearing witness to his Master ere he depart.

Agrippa II., son of "Herod, the king" whose awful end is recorded in the twelfth chapter of the Acts, had been appointed sovereign of considerable portions of his father's great dominions and was, therefore, a personage of no small importance whose visit to the new governor was quite an event in Cæsarea. Festus naturally spoke to him of the difficult case he had in hand, and found, probably to his great surprise, that Agrippa was much interested and would be glad of an opportunity to see and hear the prisoner. Accordingly, a public assembly of all the notables of Cæsarea was called, to serve the double purpose of a state ceremonial and an occasion for drawing out the well-known oratorical powers of the remarkable prisoner. Agrippa and his sister-queen Bernice, with great pomp, took the seat of honor, and Festus produced the accused to be examined by the king, who, however, instead of asking him questions, gave him an opportunity to speak for himself. The situation was entirely new, and would have been most disconcerting to a man of less earnest spirit and impassioned purpose. It is easy to speak to a sympathetic audience, and a hostile one will often stir a man up to reach the summit of his power; but what chance was there of getting up any enthusiasm, or showing any spirit, in addressing a company in which apathy was disturbed only by curiosity and contempt? Yet never does he more wonderfully rise to the occasion. This surely was one of the times when he must have felt as the poet so powerfully describes:

" Oft when the Word is on me to deliver,
 Opens the heaven and the Lord is there ;
 Desert or throng, the city or the river,
 Melts in a lucid paradise of air,—

 " Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,
 Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings,—
 Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
 Sadly contented in a show of things,—

 " Then with a rush the intolerable craving
 Shivers throughout me like a trumpet-call,—
 Oh, to save these ! to perish for their saving,
 Die for their life, be offered for them all ! "

With what impassioned earnestness, after a respectful exordium, he tells once more the oft-repeated story of his conversion, and proclaims the Gospel which had been intrusted to him by his Lord, and with what calm strength he first deals with the suggestion of Festus that his learning has been too much for his brain, and then turning from him to the king, and appealing to his knowledge of the prophets, presses home the truth of God upon him ! And when the king, fortified in his assumed indifference by the presence of the audience before which he must maintain his dignity and pomp, says in irony, "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian," he answers, not as the unsympathetic Renan suggests with a mere sally of wit returning the raillery of the king, but with tears in his voice, and his whole soul in every word, "I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds." But the bonds on both sides still remain—the chains of sin on them, the fetters of iron on him.

" Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
 Sadly contented in a show of things,"

the people seemed to be to the end ; but who will say that there will be for the prisoner of Jesus Christ no better trophies in the day of Christ's appearing, for the sower in tears no sheaves in the great day of ingathering, from the state assembly at Cæsarea ? He will look for it beyond a doubt—"forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

3. *At Rome.* The scale on which this sketch is planned will not permit our dwelling on the interesting details of the voyage. The full account given in the Acts has been minutely examined by competent men of large nautical experience, and found not only to furnish abundant evidence of having been written by one of the voyagers, but to supply better materials than any other extant writing of those times for understanding ancient ship-building and navigation. The monograph of James Smith of Jordanhill on the subject, published in 1848, is the standard authority ; but full use of his investigations has been made by subsequent writers. The result has been that not only have difficulties been cleared up, such as what seems to many modern sailors the unseaman-like act of casting anchors out of the stern, now acknowledged to have been the very best thing which under the circumstances could have been done, but even the *minutiae* of the narrative have been confirmed in a most wonderful way, since the careful survey of the coast on which they were shipwrecked, and of the sea adjoining it, has been accomplished with all modern appliances. As illustrations, we may refer to the verification of the series of soundings as the land was approached, the finding of a bank of stiff clay about the right distance from the shore which would give the anchors grip enough, and the discovery on the shore of a mud bank between the rocks which would make it possible to land in safety.

More interesting to us than the nautical details of the voyage is the opportunity it affords of seeing the conduct of the apostle through a succession of trials and perils such as falls to the lot of few. Through all he showed himself the true Christian hero, patient, trustful, fearless,

self-possessed, resourceful, submissive when overruled, but ready to take the lead at once when imminent danger summoned him to the front. We shall single out only one point for illustration, and it shall be the combination of two habits of life which are supposed by some to be incompatible, ceaseless prayer and tireless activity, the heart in heaven with God while head, and hands, and heart, are all busy with the duties of the hour and helpfulness to those around.

It was no part of the duty of the historian to unveil the inner life of Saint Paul; so it is only when he has occasion himself to speak of it, as when he would thereby cheer the drooping spirits of his fellow-voyagers, that the veil is drawn aside; but from the self-revelation of the apostle in his letters, we know that prayer was the constant habit of his soul, and we see here again, as more than once before, that at critical times he had visions and revelations in the night. Let any ordinary ship company understand that a man of that type was on board, and the general opinion would be, that however good he might be in his own way, he would be the last man to expect much of in the way of practical help in an emergency. Now, follow the story of the perilous part of the voyage, and see how the apostle bears himself. We find him first giving advice which, if it had been taken, would have avoided all the danger. He had voyaged not a little in these seas and had been thrice wrecked before;¹ so he had some excuse for putting forward his opinion; and yet it is not to be wondered at that the seafaring men paid no heed to it, and set out in spite of his warning. Then, when the storm came on and raged with such fury and so long as to make the bravest of them quail, so that the crew were in danger of giving way to despair, he cheered them all by telling them of his vision in the night and assuring them that, though he knew the ship would be lost, all their lives would be saved. When the sailors laid their cowardly plot to get off in the boat on the pretense of lowering another anchor, Paul was the man to discover it, and to frustrate it by communicating at once with the centurion, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." He had assured them all of safety; but he understood himself, and let them distinctly understand, that, in giving such an assurance, it was assumed that all proper means and precautions would be used. When, after fourteen days buffeting with wind and wave, with no chance all that time of sitting down to a regular meal, so that they were all not only worn out with exertion and exposure, but in danger of collapsing from want of food, and yet so panic-stricken that they had no heart to eat, again Paul rallies the courage of the large company—they were 276 in all—infuses into them some of his own calmness, and persuades them to make as good a meal as possible of what remains of their scanty stores, not forgetting at that terrible hour to give God thanks in presence of them all. Had it not been for that quiet meal, we may be sure that many of them would have perished from sheer exhaustion when the ship at last broke up, and each one had to make for the shore as best he could. And not only was the apostle prepared for such great emergencies, but he was quite as ready to lend a helping hand in little things. This appears once and again in the story of the storm, and it happens to come out quite incidentally in telling of Paul's adventure with the viper, which took place when he was busy gathering sticks to heap on the fire which the barbarous people had kindled, "because of the present rain, and because of the cold."

The notice of the work done at Melita (Malta) during the three months' detention is full of interest, as giving an illustration of the preaching of the Gospel to "the Barbarians"; but, as we had a specimen of this in Lystra, in the course of the second missionary journey, we shall content ourselves with referring our readers to the discourse on this subject by Robertson of Brighton in the first volume of the well-known series.

The "Castor and Pollux," which conveyed them from Malta, had a fine run by way of Syracuse and Rhegium to Puteoli, where the apostle was warmly received by the brethren. His heart was still further cheered by the cordiality of the Roman Church, from which two

¹ II. Corinthians xi, 25.

deputations had set out to meet him, the first of which traveled nearly thirty, and the second nearly twenty, miles to give him its greeting and escort him into the Eternal City. If it was as a prisoner that he entered Rome, it was not in ignominy but with honor and affection as became "the prisoner of the Lord."

Still, a prisoner he was, and had to do his work with all the limitations this imposed on him. These, happily, were as slight as they could be made by the kindly prefect of the prætorian guard, who would no doubt learn from the centurion Julius what sort of man he had in charge. Thus the privations and sufferings of the long voyage were the means of opening the door in Rome for the apostle's work. There was one most irksome restraint, however, with which the Roman law could not dispense, the necessity of his being perpetually chained to a Roman soldier — a condition of life so hard, so irritating to the nerves, so depressing to the spirits, that one marvels at the exceeding grace of God which enabled him so to triumph in Christ over this ceaseless humiliation and vexation as to be able not only to continue his work of preaching the Gospel, but to write such letters as that to the Ephesians, which has lifted so many to the heavenly places in which its author dwelt in spirit; to the Colossians, where, as scarcely anywhere else, we see the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father; and to the Philippians, which, while making touching allusion to his chains, is yet so full of joy that Bengel, that prince of exegetes, can give this as its summary: "I rejoice: rejoice ye." And what delightful evidence of the growing sweetness of the apostle's soul, as the slow years of the long captivity pass, is furnished by the exquisite letter to Philemon, a gem of purest ray, a diamond reflecting the light of the Sun of Righteousness with a luster all its own! Think, also, of the charity and hopefulness with which he regarded even that which was discouraging: "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one do it of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel: but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds. What then? only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." And, though nothing is said of his intercourse with the soldiers to whom he was chained, many of whom must have been as uncongenial companions as the apostle could well have, there is evidence, especially in the reference to the prætorian guard,¹ that not a few of them were reached by the Gospel which none of them would fail to hear from their strange prisoner.

Ten years had elapsed since the edict of Claudius had been issued, which banished the Jews from Rome. Like most edicts of the kind, it had failed of its object, for, though at first many were obliged to fly, among whom, as we found, were Aquila and Priscilla, it soon fell into abeyance through the impossibility of enforcing it on so large a population; and, the attractions of the great metropolis for a trading people like the Jews remaining as strong as ever, the Hebrew colony soon regained its numbers, and became more flourishing than before. It has been computed that their numbers at the time of Saint Paul's imprisonment could not have been far short of 60,000. The apostle had received such cruel treatment at the hands of his countrymen that he might have been pardoned if he had left the unbelieving Jews of Rome to their fate, and contented himself with the fellowship of those who had already confessed Christ and united themselves with the Roman Church; but, true to the passion of his heart as expressed in the letter he had written to the Romans,² he must in Rome as elsewhere begin at Jerusalem, not merely building on the foundation of other men, but taking the occasion which his own first visit to the great metropolis afforded him of giving the Jewish colony as a whole another opportunity of accepting their Lord and Christ. It was, therefore, his first care after his settlement "in his own hired house" to call together a representative gathering of the seven synagogues of Rome that he might explain to them his position, and deliver his message of

¹ Philippians i, 13 (Revised Version).

² Romans ix, 1-5.

salvation. Some of the heads of the Jewish community responded to his invitation and took so much interest in his statement as to appoint a day for a larger gathering, at which he "expounded the matter, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening."

That long day, to the careful reader of the Acts of the Apostles, is invested with a most tragic interest. At the opening of the book the question had been asked of the risen Lord, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" No answer could be given then. It was not for them to know the times and the seasons. They must surrender themselves to the guidance of the Holy Ghost, who would bring the kingdom in his own way. The kingdom had come, and had been offered to the Jew first, and for a considerable time to the Jew only; for all the work of the Church, for the space of twelve years at least, centered in Jerusalem. At Antioch again it was to the Jews that the blessings of the kingdom were offered first — and not at Antioch only, but in every place to which the Gospel had been carried. And now once more in the metropolis of the world is the offer made to restore at this time the kingdom to Israel, so that the children of Abraham may still be the princes of Messiah's world-wide dominion. It is the day of crisis for the Dispersion. As the Messiah himself had come to his Temple and given the faithless nation one more opportunity before they finally rejected him, so the Apostle of the Gentiles gives to the metropolitan Church of the Jews of the Dispersion one more opportunity, and pleads with them with an earnestness so impassioned that he can detain them from morning till evening. But it is all in vain. They will not have this Man to reign over them. As Christ himself had to turn sorrowfully away, with the word, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate," so his great apostle, when they departed, spoke out of a breaking heart the word of doom for the Dispersion: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, saying, Go thou unto this people, and say, by hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them. Be it known, therefore, unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: they will also hear."

From this time the Church is Gentile. The Judaizing teachers who had given Saint Paul so much anxiety and pain will presently pass out of sight, as Christianity becomes more and more cosmopolitan, and no longer will it be possible to regard it as a sect within Israel, but as a great and growing community severed from it by an ever widening gulf. There are still Jewish Christians in the Church; but in a few years Jerusalem will be in ruins, the Temple will be destroyed, the daily sacrifice will cease, and those who become Christians will have to "go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." The Epistle to the Hebrews, at the close of our period, marks the transition. It summons the believing Jews to find in Christianity not an addition to their former faith but a consummation of it, a merging of it in the faith of Christ, in whom the law, and the temple, and the priesthood, and the sacrifices receive their complete fulfillment, the kingdom finding its center no longer in the earthly but in the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God which can never be destroyed.

Our history, which has been our main stay throughout the period, now suddenly fails us. It leaves the great Apostle to the Gentiles in his own hired dwelling, still chained to the Roman soldier, but none the less receiving "all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him." How does the imprisonment end? Why are we not told? No better reason has ever been given than the very simple one that, being a historian and not a prophet, Saint Luke had nothing more to tell. As we indicated at the beginning, it is extremely probable that the Book of the Acts was written during these two years of imprisonment, and was finished

just at the close of these two years and before the imprisonment came to an end. Had it been written later, it would surely have told what the issue was; or, if for any reason the issue was unknown, there would have been some explanation of so strange a blank.

The Acts of the Apostles is a broken fragment of the history of the Church; but how wonderfully complete after all, as its course proceeds from Jerusalem, where it begins, to Rome, where it ends; from the metropolis of Judaism out of which it sprang, to the metropolis of the world which it claims as its inheritance!

And is it not the end of the age? What conflagrations are these? Rome on fire, and after it fiercest fires of persecution in which the great leaders and multitudes of the flock of God will perish! Jerusalem on fire, and all its ancient glory gone forever! Surely "the end of the world" has come!

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TWO MARTYR-APOSTLES.

IT is more than probable that Saint Luke perished in the Neronian persecution, so that there is not even an appendix to tell what was the end of the two great leaders, Saint Peter and Saint Paul. But we have some light upon the subject from the letters of these apostles, and also from the somewhat dubious source of Church tradition. Out of these materials our last chapter must be constructed.

Of Saint Peter very little can be said with any certainty. Like Moses, he disappears from the sacred page: like Enoch, he was not, for God took him. The last indication of his whereabouts is the salutation at the close of his first epistle, "She that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you," the reference probably being, as expressed by the Authorized Version, to the Church in Babylon. This would seem to indicate that as Saint Paul had been the great apostle of the West, Saint Peter had been the great apostle of the East; for Babylon, though no longer occupying the proud position it had in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, was still a great city, and the metropolis of the Dispersion. It is plain from the Acts of the Apostles that Saint James, the brother of the Lord, after the transference of the center of interest to Antioch, was the leading spirit in the Church at Jerusalem; and it seems quite natural that the apostle of the circumcision, in his desire to bear his part in carrying the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth, should make the great Jewish colony at Babylon his objective point, as Saint Paul had ever in his western journeys made it his great ambition to preach the Gospel at Rome.

This supposition, however, conflicts with the tradition so dear to the Roman Catholic Church that Saint Peter was for twenty-five years bishop of Rome, their contention being that, after his escape from Herod Agrippa, as related in the twelfth chapter of the Acts, he went to Rome, and remained there during all the time of Saint Paul's missionary tours. This tradition is obviously untenable; for we know that Saint Peter was present at the council of Jerusalem, and certainly not as a delegate from Rome; we know further that later on he had an encounter with Saint Paul at Antioch in which all his sympathies were plainly with the East; and, moreover, the absence of all mention of his name in the Epistle to the Romans, in the portions of the history in the Acts which refer to Rome, and in all the epistles written from Rome, would be quite unaccountable had an apostle of such prominence been the leading man of the Church, or even present in it, during that time.

It is in order to make the epistle square with the tradition that the suggestion has been offered that Saint Peter means Rome when he says Babylon, very much as the term Modern Babylon might be applied to London or New York. We admit, indeed, that Saint John in the

Apocalypse speaks of Rome as "Babylon," which is quite in keeping with the highly symbolical style of the whole book; but this is not the character of Saint Peter's letter; and the salutation at the end of it is as simple and direct as any in Saint Paul's Epistles, so that there seems no reason whatever for supposing him to mean one place when he says another. The difficulty has been raised that Josephus speaks of a great exodus of Jews from Babylon in the reign of Claudius, which is supposed to have so diminished the Jewish colony as to deprive it of the importance which would justify Saint Peter making it a center of his work; but those who insist on this seem to forget that a similar argument against the importance of Rome as a Gospel center might be based on the edict of Claudius. It is not so easy as some suppose to expel or exterminate Jewish colonies of such magnitude as those at Babylon and at Rome.

While the twenty-five years' residence at Rome is certainly a fable, there seems no good reason to doubt the well-supported tradition that Saint Peter did visit Rome in his old age, and that he suffered martyrdom there about the same time as the Apostle Paul. It is most interesting to see the two apostles, whose paths had lain so far apart, thus meeting at the close; and it is touching to mark the evidence of their oneness in Christ Jesus. Our appreciation of Saint Peter's nobility and generosity of character is still further heightened by the many indications of his hearty sympathy with the brother who had, in the course of the years, almost overshadowed him. In his First Epistle he addresses himself to the sojourners of the Dispersion in that very region which had been the scene of Saint Paul's first triumphs, and the epistle is sent by the hand of Silvanus, the associate of Saint Paul in that work, whom he speaks of as "our faithful brother"; and in the Second Epistle, which, though much disputed, seems likely to retain the confidence the great majority of Christians have placed in it, he speaks of "our beloved brother Paul," and of "all his epistles," "wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." The apostles of Jerusalem and Babylon, of Antioch and Rome, are one in Christ Jesus, and in death they are not divided.

But we must now follow Saint Paul, as he finishes his course. We have to guide us, besides tradition, the last group of his letters, known as the Pastoral Epistles—two addressed to Timothy and one to Titus. It is fair to say that the authenticity of these letters is still questioned by men who cannot be called destructive critics; but we have only to study such a calm and candid discussion of the vexed question as Mr. G. C. Findlay's Appendix to the English edition of "Sabatier," to find sufficient grounds for retaining our confidence in these valuable portions of the Canon of Sacred Scripture. From the references in the First Epistle to Timothy and in the Epistle to Titus we learn that Saint Paul, at the close of the long imprisonment which had extended over five years from his arrest in Jerusalem, was set at liberty and resumed his apostolic labors, visiting many of the churches he had planted and carrying the Gospel into the regions beyond, while some ancient authorities state that he planted churches in Spain. As we read the Second Epistle to Timothy we learn that a second time he is a prisoner at Rome, with the conviction that the time of his departure is at hand. It has been conjectured with much probability that he was apprehended at Troas and hurried off so quickly that he had to leave behind him the cloak, and books, and precious parchments which he asks Timothy to bring to him to mitigate the rigor of his prison life;¹ that he was taken to Ephesus for trial and thence by appeal, as formerly at Cæsarea, transferred to Rome, from which he writes.

The state of things is sadly altered since the last imprisonment. Since the great fire at Rome,² the blame for which the emperor wantonly cast on the Christians, with the object, it is asserted, of diverting suspicion from himself, there had been the most savage cruelties perpetrated on those who refused to abjure the Name of Christ. We can well understand that, when this was the mood of the emperor, there would be no mercy shown to the prisoners awaiting

¹ II. Timothy iv, 13.

² See Tacitus, "Annals," XV.

their trial; and we know also from the secular history of the time that the good Prefect Burrhus, who had been so indulgent to Saint Paul during his first imprisonment, was now replaced by the nefarious Tigellinus, of whom the worst that can be said is that he was a man after Nero's own heart.

But the rigors of the imprisonment were not so hard to bear as the loneliness which oppressed the affectionate spirit of the apostle. In a time of such terror, none but the bravest hearts would dare to seek him out in his prison cell. This will account for the deeply pathetic references in that last letter to Timothy to those who had forsaken him, and his delighted appreciation of the kindness of Onesiphorus, "for he oft refreshed me," he writes, "and was not ashamed of my chain; but, when he was in Rome, he sought me diligently and found me—the Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord in that day."

At the time of writing this he had made his "first defense," and had been "delivered out of the mouth of the lion" for the time. This expression makes it probable, as indeed it is from what we know of Nero and his ways, that he appeared before the emperor himself. What a dramatic situation! The mad Caligula and the cruel Claudius had indelibly disgraced the Roman purple, but Nero went far beyond them both in the shamelessness of his profligacy and iniquity. And at his bar stands the Christ-like Paul! There is no one to tell the story of that trial. If only the same pen which has given us so vivid a picture of Paul before Felix, before Festus, before Agrippa, had been able to reach the climax by giving a sketch of Paul before Nero! But there was no friendly face in the court that terrible day: "At my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account."

Of the second trial we have not even a notice, for after it there can be no more letters from that dear hand, no more words from these hallowed lips. "From every evil work," indeed, the Lord delivered him, but not from the sword of the Roman executioner. It was an evil work as done by the tyrant, but for the apostle it was the fulfillment of the last utterance of his triumphant faith: "the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen."

Our period closes in thick darkness. The shadow of the cross is on the final page. Is this the end of what opened with such majesty and promise? We began with tongues of fire from heaven in the upper room; whence are these tongues of fire in the garden of Nero? But let us not forget the Christian badge of victory, the banner of the cross. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord."

But what of the Church? Are there not troubles within as well as foes without? What mean these signs of incoming error and corruption, these dark hints of a sad falling away, a terrible apostasy, which darken the pages of the later Epistles? Are these to be the last words of inspiration? Nay: the Apostle of Love has yet to crown the edifice of the sacred Canon with his Apocalypse, his Epistles, his Gospel of the Son of God; and, though in his day, too, there will be fires of persecution and days of gloom and darkness, a door will be opened in heaven, and he will be permitted to see and to write how, amid varying fortunes, the kingdom will hold on its course through the stormy years of the future until there are heard "great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ: and he shall reign forever and ever"—and further on still will the vision carry him to "where beyond these voices there is peace"; for, as in our book of history we have been carried from Jerusalem to Rome, in that Book of Apocalypse we are conveyed over the ruins of the old Rome to the New Jerusalem, the city of God, the home of the saints, "where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Augustine

BOOK XV.

FROM THE FALL OF JERUSALEM TO THE TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY.

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BIDA.

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.

BOOK XV.

FROM THE FALL OF JERUSALEM TO THE TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

THE SHADOW OF ANTICHRIST.

THE student of history must be impressed by the ominous significance which attaches to the term "world" in the vocabulary of apostolic literature. It seems to stand for something dark, forbidding, terrible; something with which there can be no compromise, but which must be shunned, hated, and overcome. Peter refers to its "corruptions"¹ and "pollutions";² James declares that friendship with it is enmity with God;³ while John, with graphic intensity, sums up our duty toward it as he characterizes its pernicious possessions and predicts its ultimate overthrow: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."⁴ Neither in this passage nor elsewhere have we anything like exact definition. Everything is left vague, shadowy, and obscure. Imagination, combining the various representations given in the New Testament regarding the nature and influence of this foe, readily pictures a baleful presence, almost an incarnation of the debauchery, the avarice, the cruelty, the superstition, the fatalism, the weariness, and the unutterable coarseness of all the ages, having come in flaunting insolence to reign over the empire of the Cæsars.

To the primitive Church that which it called the "world" was practically a personality, wise, subtle, seductive, and even ubiquitous, blinding the eyes of men to the claims of truth, covertly stealing from the heart the Gospel seeds sown by faithful preachers, and vigorously and persistently assailing the purity and the consistency of Christians themselves. It was to the early disciples of Christ, what it is still, the symbol and synonym of everything vicious and criminal, everything, in a word, hostile to the progress of spiritual religion, and to the regeneration and elevation of mankind. No wonder, then, that the sharp cry of warning sounds perpetually through the closing portions of the inspired Canon, and that the Church is peremptorily summoned not for a moment to tolerate the usurpations of the world, nor in the least degree to submit to the assailing of its infamies.

Unquestionably the condition of the Roman empire, whose boundaries determined the limits of the world as known to Christianity, was so despicable and so desperate as to justify the repugnance and alarm of every sober-minded and virtuous citizen. Cicero, half a century before Christ, had declared, "The Commonwealth to be utterly lost." This conviction, however, was expressed only in view of the insatiable ambition of Julius Cæsar, and not in view of what was infinitely more perilous, the corruption, licentiousness, wastefulness, superstition, and gross

¹ II. Peter i, 4.

² II. Peter ii, 20.

³ James iv, 4.

⁴ I. John ii, 15-17.

impiety of the entire community. And from the days of the great orator the moral deterioration of the nation had become more rapid and more pronounced. In the times of the emperors, especially from Augustus to Constantine, it had reached its lowest point, and more than once threatened to engulf in darkness the flickering light of the blessed Gospel. Slavery cursed the entire land. Everywhere its enervating, debasing, and emasculating influence was felt. It has been estimated that upward of 60,000,000 human beings belonged to this unhappy class. Mommsen, when describing the city of Rome itself, thus divides its population of 1,610,000 inhabitants: "There were 10,000 senators and knights, 60,000 foreigners, 20,000 garrison, 320,000 free citizens, 300,000 women and children, and 900,000 slaves."

Evidently these multitudes, without rights, without social dignity, and mainly without hope, could hardly fail to contaminate and debilitate their superiors. It is a law of providence that immoral society shall give birth to its own Nemesis. The Erinnys and Eumenides, the Greeks to the contrary notwithstanding, are not the daughters of Acheron and Night, but the direct issue of wrongs and wrong-doing. A civilization grows rich on drunkenness and debauchery. But the vices it has fostered for gain speedily consume its substance, and leave it bankrupt, without the vigor and virtue necessary to restore prosperity. Or it may advance its interests by immolating all that is beautiful in the race. But the avenger is near at hand. The slave is not powerless. He bruises the heel of the foot that is placed upon his neck. Burdened, manacled, lashed, exposed to the cruel passions of master or mistress, he is not impotent. He retaliates without seeming to do so, strikes down his oppressor while cringing before him, and wastes his strength while apparently he is seeking to save him from exhaustion. Chains are always ultimately heavier on the tyrant than on his victim; and the rod on the servant's back will leave its blackest scars on the soul of the hardened torturer.

Nowhere has the operation of this inexorable law been more distinctly disclosed than in the ethical and social condition of the empire. In the city these 900,000 slaves indisposed the 320,000 free citizens to toil, for industry had been branded with shame. And, as these freemen were idle and had to be supported, they came to depend on the State for supplies. In this manner they were pauperized. The destruction of self-reliance resulted in the loss of courage and self-respect, and they were at last unable to defend themselves from Goth and Hun. The rich suffered as much as the poor. Wealthy Romans regarded their slaves merely as chattels, and dealt with them accordingly; a Flaminius slaying one of his household to show a giddy companion what he had never seen—the agonies of death; and a Pollio feeding his lampreys on the bodies of his poor bondsmen.

These slaves were usually divided into two orders—the *familia urbana* and the *familia rustica*—the former consisting of domestics, the latter of field and other kind of laborers. Men of the type of vulgar Zoilus, whose character is painted in full by Martial, delighted in a numerous retinue, anticipating every want and ministering to every whim. The *rustica* of a single owner sometimes numbered 10,000, and have been known to equal 20,000. Slaves were also educated in many cases to be teachers, secretaries, librarians, poets, readers, and some were trained to amuse their masters by jests and witticisms. As manual labor had come to be lightly esteemed because of its association with bondage, for the same reason the haughty patricians of the empire affected contempt for letters. An institution that could thus bring industry and intelligence into disrepute must have been a source of continued evil, especially when it is remembered that its supplies had to come from selling conquered peoples, or from defenseless individuals cruelly kidnapped and thrust into miserable subjection. In Cicero's famous speech, "*Pro Cluentio*," we have an instance of a free man being sold into slavery through the treachery of his relatives. Nor was this exceptional. Seneca declares that travelers and other innocent persons had frequently been betrayed into bonds. And these practices, with the "institution" itself, go to make plain the dominant inhumanity of that old heathen world

which the Church confronted on the death of Saint Paul. Yes; that is the word — “inhumanity”; for in pleasures, in business, in domestic relations, in war or peace, inhumanity ruled supreme.

Enter the Colosseum, and study the faces of 87,000 people who have gathered to witness a bloody spectacle. As you contemplate this vast audience, you will at once perceive the hard lines of the countenance, the worn, jaded look, the hungry, famished expression only to be appeased by sanguinary exhibitions. The nature of their recreations accords with their dull, soulless features. Gladiators, men and occasionally even women, fight before them to the death.

In a show provided by the great Julius 320 pairs of gladiators contended. Even Trajan devoted 5,000 such combatants to the popular desire for exciting contests. Augustus, in the paper attached to his will, reminds posterity that he had given to the public 8,000 gladiators, and had introduced to the arena of the amphitheater 3,510 wild beasts. Titus, the high and noble, butchered thousands of Jews in the games at Berytus. Savage animals from the Soudan or Central Asia were on many occasions arrayed against each other. Frequently some despised criminal was bound and exposed to be lacerated by bear or bull, or a new Scævola in the person of some condemned malefactor was doomed to hold his hand over the fire till it was reduced to a cinder. And these with other atrocities made up the sum of a Roman holiday. There was no sympathy with suffering, no sense of the sacredness of life, no horror at the sight of so many fellow-beings maimed, torn, wounded, slain. The crowds of spectators were heartless and always thirsty for blood, and the women were about as brutal as the men. And alas! the inhumanity of the circus and the amphitheater was but symptomatic of the inhumanity that reigned triumphant throughout the empire, that exposed helpless infancy, that slaughtered innocent slaves on the violent and mysterious taking off of their master, that inflicted indescribable punishments on the transgressors of the law, that raged in domestic poisonings and assassinations, and that defrauded neighbors and outraged the innocence of girls and women.

Low ideas regarding the essential nature of man account for this disregard of the claims of pity and compassion. To the multitude he was not made in the image of God, was not endued with immortality, and was not dowered with sacred and inalienable rights. At the best he was only a higher type of animal—a thinking one, undoubtedly, but still an animal—and being nothing more could not be entitled to higher consideration. Why should the mob refrain from inflicting on the individual gross and coarse insults, causing him to writhe beneath exquisite tortures, if he should happen to be helpless in its grasp? Do not savage beasts prey on each other, and if they are starving do they not devour the weak? Why, then, should a creature, differing from them in degree rather than in kind, be exempt from a similar fate, when the majority craves enjoyment from the sight of his agonies? Such must ever be the ultimate logic of materialism, though the refinement derived from Christian culture may somewhat abate the rigor and brutality of its application in modern times.

Inhumanity, if not necessarily the cause of dissoluteness, is generally involved in its gratifications. Prodigals and profligates are usually heartless, even if the heartless are not always prodigals and profligates. In the empire they were apparently inseparable. Literature in the age of which we write was little less than a school of filth and debauchery. The stories of Petronius and of Apuleius, the satires of Persius and Juvenal, the lyrics of Horace, and the odes of Ovid were fatal to modesty and purity. Even the writings of Lucretius, who lived before this period — born 95 B. C.—but whose influence long survived him, dedicated his great poem to one of the most unscrupulous of men, and himself committed suicide—two facts which indicate the tendency of his philosophy. The terrible histories penned by Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dion Cassius added only to the general demoralization, for they are at best but the sad chronicles of human infirmity, iniquity, grossness, and bestiality. Then, as now, they only led the reader, in the words of Livy, “to pursue the decline of morals following the decay

of laws — then their gradual sinking — then their headlong fall — and finally their entombment in these times, wherein we can neither bear our vices nor their remedies." And from so gloomy a review what could be born but despair? Hope was dead. No one dared anticipate a revival of virtue. Few, indeed, desired it. From poets and satirists the giddy throng wandered to the baths to gaze on obscene pictures, to listen to declaimers and rhetoricians, and to keep appointments with frail women. Or they retired to the theater where pantomimists, and actors of the most villainous character, exerted their wiles only to inflame passion and smother the last embers of expiring shame. Luxury and licentiousness invaded the noblest families. Divorce was frequent, and Roman matrons, according to Nero's tutor, counted the years not by the consuls, but by the number of their discarded husbands. It is not necessary to believe all that has been written of the orgies of Vitellius, or the infamies of Messalina, nor even to credit the statement that Lollia Paulina wore a garment costing forty million sesterces, for an adequate estimate to be formed of the reckless wastefulness of the mistress of the world. Contemporaneous history is full of accounts of elegant marbles, of precious stones, of rich viands, of Setinian, Cæcuban, and Falernian wines, of robes worth a king's ransom, of palaces such as Nero's "Golden House," more like towns than residences, and of revels and festivities on the borders of illuminated lakes, with dainty booths turned into brothels and with women of the highest rank serving as prostitutes.

And over this mass of seething corruption, over this inhumanity rioting in indecency, reigned rulers fashioned in its own likeness, the Cæsars — Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius, Nero, Galba, and others, whose tyrannies and cruelties justified the verse of Lucan, who in his "Pharsalia" represents a soldier returning from the dead with the glad news that adamantine chains were being forged to bind the emperor to the rocks of an infernal Caucasus. And yet on earth he was being worshiped as a divinity. At this point is touched the most singular and startling evidence of Roman degeneracy.

The religion of the empire was a composite system, made up of many deities, from many lands, with many rituals. It was like the population, somewhat hybrid in nature, and differed from it not at all in morality. For political reasons all pagan cults were tolerated, and perhaps it is not too much to say that none of them were believed. At least, it will not be denied that incredulity was prevalent, especially among the patricians and the priests. They very generally treated as silly fables and idle myths the stories of gods and goddesses, and in private ridiculed the superstitions of the temples. And yet among these people developed the gravest and most blasphemous of absurdities — the apotheosis of the Cæsars after death, and sometimes even during life. The origin of this profane custom is not clear. It may have grown out of the spirit of adulation which arbitrary power is apt to beget. At first it may have been devised as a means of overawing distant tribes with the majesty of the conquering Imperator. Possibly it may have been an expedient fallen on to give unity and coherence to the diverse if not antagonizing cults of the Pantheon. It said to the subject nations: "You are at liberty to render homage to your local deities, but that we may be made one by our religion we must all find a common god in the emperor." Horace had addressed Augustus as Apollo, Mercury, or Mars, and pretended to believe that he must be one of them. Courtiers spoke of him significantly as "*our* god" — and doubtless he was all the god they cared to flatter. Domitian, in the very intoxication of impious pride, demanded to be addressed as the Supreme. Tacitus, however, is our authority for saying that "Nero was the first of the Cæsars to be officially recognized as a god before his death." The beginning of this monstrous wickedness is doubtless to be traced to the times of the immortal Julius, who even in his youth and while living in coarse delights was exalted to the Pontificate, and after his assassination was enthroned as a being entitled to divine honors. His successor was similarly magnified. Augustus was regarded as a *præsens Divus*, and on some public buildings his title, "Son of God," was

inscribed. All this was bad enough, but when this homage was offered to wretches who had worn the purple, and who had disgraced humanity and the scepter, the black horror of it became apparent. Think of Caligula as a god, challenging in mockery Jupiter Capitolinus to fight; or conceive, if it is possible, of Claudius, steeped in atrocious sins against purity, being in any sense associated with supernatural intelligences; and worse than all, what shall be said of a Nero, the murderer of his wife and his mother, the buffoon and coward, one of the most contemptible monarchs that ever reigned on earth, being lifted up to a throne in heaven? Imagination itself staggers before the enormity of the blasphemy. What lower depths of impiety could be needed to sink the empire in irretrievable disaster?

Nor are we to suppose that the citizens were permitted to take this offensive sacrilege otherwise than seriously. They were expected to bow before the statue of the emperor; if so commanded, to burn incense to it; and to regard with superstitious veneration the coin bearing his effigy. Failure in any of these respects entailed severe penalties, and sometimes death. Much has been written in praise of the pagan spirit of toleration, and much has been confidently affirmed that requires proof. That the Romans countenanced various faiths I have already admitted. But it is to be observed, however diverse these may seem, they not only had affinity for each other, but were likewise one in principle. Idolatries of every kind have much in common, and are so nearly alike as to be able to abide together in comparative peace. But a religion that antagonized all altars, that repudiated the divinity of human beings, whether emperors or not, and that maintained a monotheism that involved the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, ancient heathenism had no disposition to encourage. Toleration indeed! Was it not intolerance that persecuted Socrates and that resulted in his death? When Protagoras expressed a doubt as to the existence of the gods, was he not exiled from Athens? Did not Mæcenæ, the learned and the brilliant, declare to Augustus that whatever else he might tolerate he must not tolerate alien religions? Has not Cicero explained that no man may be allowed to worship any gods not officially recognized by law? And yet with these facts before them, there are some writers so infatuated with paganism that they never weary of extolling its alleged liberality. These modern devotees are self-deceived, or they are indifferent to the truth. Paganism was only tolerant of what was essentially in harmony with its own spirit. Beyond that it was fierce, dictatorial, oppressive. Especially in the Roman empire it would tolerate, not only no other king than Cæsar, but no other rival god. Its ultimatum was: Burn incense to the ruler, or perish. It allowed no hesitancy; it admitted of no compromise; and it knew nothing of soul liberty, or of the rights of conscience. Inevitably, then, it followed that as soon as Christianity should come to sufficient prominence to be recognized, and should acquire sufficient influence to be felt in society, a serious conflict would arise. It, too, would be commanded to render divine honors to Cæsar. While the authorities might condone its failure to recognize their mythological deities, they would not for a moment permit it to ignore the majesty of the emperor. Will the new religion yield? The issue it cannot avoid. It must choose between Christ and Cæsar. The former is as imperative and exclusive as the latter. It must choose one or the other. It cannot choose both. Is it too much to say that the destiny of mankind depends on the decision?

The apostles were painfully conscious of the gravity of the situation. They discerned the impending battle, hardly more than commenced in their own day, and perceived that it would be waged through coming centuries. The elements of society we have glanced at in this chapter, they realized were intensely hostile to Christianity, and must continue, however changeable might be their forms, to assail its teachings and undermine its influence. To them these unorganized elements seemed to come together, to coalesce, to shape themselves into a definite system, even into an organic force or government. What they called the "world" lost its fluid and nebulous character and became an empire, a kingdom, confronting that other

kingdom — the kingdom of heaven. They speak of the “prince of this world,” of warring against “the rulers of the darkness of this world,” and contrast with him and them the “Captain of their salvation.” The two kingdoms as they portray them are in a sense counterparts of each other, though differing fundamentally in moral and spiritual life. All the unregenerate are citizens of the one, and all the regenerate are members of the other. The fruits of the Spirit distinguish the heavenly kingdom; the works of the flesh are the products of the earthly. And over the latter reigns a usurper who claims the honor due exclusively to the Lord who rules over the former, and who to gain his end will even go so far as to profess Christianity himself. The singular and striking antithesis between the two empires is brought out with special clearness by Saint John. In the Apocalypse we find the Church presented under the form of a woman, and of a city, and the hostile world under similar imagery. The analogies between them are thus summed up by an English writer:

“These prophecies¹ present two broadly contrasted *women*, identified with two broadly contrasted *cities*, one reality being in each case doubly represented — as a *woman* and as a *city*. The harlot and Babylon are one; the bride and the heavenly Jerusalem are one. The two women are contrasted in every particular that is mentioned about them; the one is pure as purity itself, ‘made ready’ and fit for heaven’s unsullied holiness, the other foul as corruption could make her, fit only for the fires of destruction. The one belongs to the Lamb, who loves her as the bridegroom loves the bride; the other is associated with a wild beast, and with the kings of the earth, who ultimately hate and destroy her. The one is clothed with fine linen, and in another place is said to be clothed with the sun and covered with a coronet of stars—that is, robed in divine righteousness, and resplendent with heavenly glory; the other is attired in scarlet and gold, in jewels and pearls, gorgeous indeed, but with earthly splendor only. The one is represented as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ; the other is mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. The one is persecuted, pressed hard by the dragon, driven into the wilderness, and well nigh overwhelmed; the other is drunken with martyr blood, and seated on a beast which has received its power from the persecuting dragon. The one sojourns in solitude in the wilderness; the other reigns in the wilderness over peoples, and nations, and kindreds, and tongues. The one goes in with the Lamb to the marriage supper amid the glad hallelujahs; the other is stripped, insulted, torn, and destroyed by her guilty paramours. We lose sight of the bride amid the effulgence of heavenly glory and joy, and of the harlot amid the gloom and darkness of the smoke that ‘rose up forever and ever.’”²

This admirable exposition enables the reader clearly to perceive the justness of the position we maintain, namely, that the apostles took all that they meant by the term “world,” and in their thought fashioned it into a kingdom, as real, apparent, and coherent as the kingdom of heaven, against whose existence, expansion, and extension it arrayed all of its malevolent energies. The solidarity of the good, which requires neither organization nor officialism to effect, they realized was opposed by the natural and inevitable solidarity of the evil; and to this latter, to this accumulation and concentration of the world-spirit, to this operation and coöperation of its presumption and blasphemies, in its final and most terrific manifestation, was given the ominous and expressive name of Antichrist.

This term, as far as the New Testament is concerned, is exclusively Johannine,³ although the idea it represents is not. The beloved disciple writes: “Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists.” This, however, is a mere allusion, and it is to Saint Paul we are to look for a full length portrait of this adversary. To the Thessalonian Christians he forwarded the most complete description of that fateful power whose reign was to be with all the lying deceitfulness of Satan. These are

¹ Revelation xii, xiii, xvii, xviii.

² Guinness, “The Approaching End of the Age,” p. 143.

³ I. John ii, 18, 22, iv, 3; II. John 7.

his words: "Let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be [the second advent], except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, . . . setting himself forth as God. . . . Now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to naught by the manifestation of his coming; even he whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing."¹

Various commentators have assumed that the apostle in this passage has reference solely to an individual, and not to a system or succession of men. This view is known to the historian of exposition as the doctrine of a personal antichrist. They who advocate it teach that at a certain point in the progress of Christianity there is to appear a veritable "man of sin," an individual like the tyrant king, Antiochus Epiphanes, or like the insane emperor, Caligula, who being filled with demoniac impiety would exalt himself against the true God, and would seat himself in the Temple, seeking to supersede Christ and his salvation by the substitution of himself and his superstitions. But this interpretation has not commanded the assent of the majority of earnest inquirers. That it was adhered to by many of the early Church is not to be denied, and can easily be accounted for. When Caligula (40 A. D.) ordered the Jews to erect his image in the Temple of Jerusalem in the form of Olympian Zeus, recalling the similar conduct of Antiochus, what more natural than for the horrified disciples to see in the blasphemy the supreme mark of antichrist? And when Nero persecuted the saints, and rose to such bad preëminence it was certainly excusable if the bewildered friends of the martyrs did identify the tyrant with Paul's "man of sin." The Sibylline Oracles gave color to this conception; and the belief current during the earlier centuries that Nero had fled beyond the Euphrates, from whence to return with armies for the purpose of completing his exterminating work, added largely to its popularity. But, notwithstanding the support thus given to the idea of a personal antichrist, it is not demanded by a sound exegesis of the text, and has not maintained its authority with very many eminent scholars. In the Book of Daniel and in the Apocalypse the singular, "king," is used of a succession of kings, or of a kingdom including a series of rulers. Why should it not be the same in the passage addressed to the Thessalonians? Moreover, the character of the "man of sin," and that of the "Beast" portrayed in Revelation, so fully correspond that we have no reason to doubt their identity. It is hardly conceivable that two so perfectly resembling each other could possibly arise. Both are of Satan; both usurp the prerogatives of the Almighty; both are inveterately opposed to Christ; and, at last, both shall go to perdition. Evidently here we have not two distinct embodiments of evil, but only one; and, reading the prophecy of Paul in the light of the vision described by John, that embodiment cannot be restricted to one individual, but must be applied to a succession of individuals, or to a system, inseparable in thought from a multitude of individuals.

As I understand the apostle, he is contemplating the world-power, which stood out in the imagination of the primitive Church as an organized kingdom of darkness arrayed against the kingdom of light. He beholds it coming more distinctly into prominence as an enemy of the purity and grace of the Gospel. But what is to him most startling, is the blasphemous assumption of this world-power to be endued with the attributes and authority of God. This is the one astounding feature of the development that is of all others the most significant. The "man of sin" claims the worship due to the Almighty, pretends to speak in his name, and to act in his stead. And it is at this point, when the world, hiding its foulness under the cloak of religion,

¹ II. Thessalonians ii, 3-11 (Revised Version).

and professing to act on behalf of religion, assails or seeks to repress or govern spiritual and evangelical Christianity, that it becomes specifically the antichrist. According to Saint Paul, the period when this stage of iniquity shall be reached will be determined by two events — by the final apostacy of the Jews, and by their overthrow as a nation. He says that there must be first “a falling away.” I believe he has reference to Israel, that was rapidly rejecting Christ altogether, and in denying him was repudiating Jehovah’s covenant, and was exiling itself from fellowship and communion with God by its many abominations. The other event is described as “the removing out of the way of the one that restraineth.” To get at the meaning of the writer it is well to remember that the religion of the Jews was recognized, that is, was licensed by the empire. Its right to exist and to be exercised was not challenged by the authorities. When Christianity appeared it was looked on merely as a sect of the Hebrew faith. Its disciples were regarded in Rome as Israelites differing only from their co-religionists in perhaps greater austerity of life, or in some meaningless ceremonial customs. As long as this impression prevailed pagan hostility against the Christian Church was restrained. But when it became apparent that Christianity and Judaism were not identical, and that the latter had no right to the imperial toleration conceded to the former, then the envenomed world in its antichristian form asserted its supremacy. This removal of the restraining barrier was effected with the downfall of Jerusalem. For not only then did the rebellious race forfeit all its civil rights, but then it was made clear, as the Christians abandoned the city and would not participate in the revolt, that in faith they were widely and irreconcilably separated from their Jewish countrymen. With the destruction of that which hindered, appeared the deified form of the emperors, claiming obedience from their subjects in things sacred as well as in things secular, claiming it first as pagans, and then, unhappily, as professed Christians, and enforcing the same with manifold pains and penalties.

It ought to be clearly recognized that while antichrist began under paganism, its manifestation did not end there. What it represents is not necessarily heathenism, but a succession of men governed by a system, or a system perpetuated by a succession of men, which asserts the right of the world-spirit to reign supreme in religion, whether the religion be professedly heathen, or nominally Christian. Hence it is that an ecclesiastical order, and a communion for ages closely allied with various States of Europe, came to be identified with antichrist by those to whom their doctrines and assumptions were repugnant. This is not the place either to affirm or deny the justice of this opinion. As I am not studying prophecy, but writing history, and only the history of a definite period, I cannot discuss such questions as these. Whether Innocent III. had any warrant for declaring the Saracens to be antichrist, and whether Gregory IX. was justified in pronouncing Frederick II. to be the beast that rose from the sea, and whether Luther was within the bounds of truth when he arraigned the papacy as the Mother of Harlots, are not issues for me to meet. They lie beyond my province in these pages, as does the cognate inquiry whether Luther himself may not be the antichrist, as has been more than hinted in many influential quarters. It is enough for us to know that wherever any power rejects the authority of revelation and becomes a God to itself, insubordinately rejecting the rule of heaven from its own life; and wherever it alters, shapes, and molds religion to conform to its own arbitrary decrees; and wherever it employs worldly methods, and would make religion dependent on worldly patronage; wherever, in a word, rivalry and hostility arise to the supreme headship of Christ — there, whether in paganism or Christendom, in Romanism or Protestantism, in the Church or out, there is antichrist.

If this larger exposition of the apostle’s language is to be taken as fairly unfolding what was foremost in his mind, then we must so far modify our explication of the “restraint to be removed” as possibly to include in it the transference of the seat of imperial government to the new city of Constantinople. When this event occurred the field was left clear at Rome for

hierarchical developments and changes, ending in the possible incarnation of the world-power in an influential section of the Church itself. On this subject Cardinal Manning has written lucidly, and deserves in this connection to be quoted. "The abandonment of Rome was the liberation of the pontiff. Whatsoever claims to obedience the emperors may have made, and whatsoever compliance the pontiff may have yielded, the whole previous relation, anomalous and annulled again and again by the vices and outrages of the emperors, was finally dissolved by a higher power. . . . And from the hour of this providential liberation, when by a Divine intervention the chains fell off from the hands of the successor of Saint Peter, as once before from his own, no sovereign has ever reigned in Rome except the Vicar of Christ."¹

Thus, then, according to his Eminence, the temporal power of the Church was attained through the withdrawal of Constantine and his government to the shores of the Bosphorus and of the Sea of Marmora. That which hindered this unhappy secular development being removed, the world-spirit was clothed with pontifical robes and was enthroned as supreme in the kingdom of Christ. But it was just as much the "man of sin" when it thus usurped authority under Christian forms as when it tyrannized in the name of all the deities of High Olympus. This the Cardinal did not perceive. Nevertheless, it is true. And it is further true that the prophetic imagery of Saint Paul has been translated into history, not only on the banks of the Tiber, nor solely in the Catholic Church, but everywhere, and in any communion, where the spiritual has been subordinated to the secular, and the Headship of Christ has been presumptuously arrogated by prelates and presbyters, or by earthly potentates and parliaments.

Although the antichrist was not distinctly and finally evolved when the great apostle addressed the Thessalonians, nevertheless he seems to have been conscious of an ever-deepening shadow announcing its speedy appearance. He warns the brethren, telling them that the "mystery of lawlessness" was already working. All around him, evidently, were signs of an approaching outbreak of hostility against the Church. Remember that the epistle in which he writes these things was penned during the reign of Nero, and that, though he had not as yet stood before the imperial tribunal, he must have been familiar with reports of outrages, public and private, which were beginning to unsettle the allegiance of the vicious and cruel Romans themselves. Meditating on the tragedies being enacted, and knowing that the chief instigator was being hailed as a god, it surely needed little, if any, inspiration to foresee that these enormities must precipitate the inevitable collision between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of the world. Such moral and social chaos as prevailed at Rome could not, in the nature of things, pass without giving birth to some monstrous creation. That it was generating the "man of sin" was to the apostle most certain. And, unless I greatly err, when he refers to the "mystery of lawlessness" as already working, he has direct reference to Nero himself as its chief author and primary embodiment. He sees in him the prototype of the antichrist. Not only does the history of this dark form begin with the emperor, but he becomes the pattern of its most hideous features. He was seed and poison-flower in one. While its horrible and portentous shadow, he was also the beginning of its substance. This, in my opinion, is the explanation of the vague hint and guarded warning conveyed in the letter to the Thessalonians. The apostle could not have been more explicit without involving the brethren in serious calamities. That he was, however, clear enough to be understood, and that he was understood as I have interpreted him, is evident from the fact that the early Christians very generally identified antichrist with Nero. Someone with the influence of authority must have put this idea in motion, and I do not think I am wrong in attributing it to Saint Paul in the utterance we are studying. It is, however, manifest that, in the horror and bewilderment of the times the disciples expounded it too absolutely, and regarded its significance as exhausted in their own epoch. They can hardly be blamed for not seeing beyond the age in which they lived and

¹ "Temporal Power of Vicar of Christ," P. xi, 1.

suffered. It is only natural that they should have been partially blinded by the terror of their surroundings. Hence it was that to them the last of the Cæsars was the full-grown "man of sin" and not merely the embryo; was the "lawless one" in his completeness, and not the awful, living, acting prophecy of his immeasurable infamies. They lacked in discrimination. It was a fault, and yet an excusable one. They did not see as far as their teacher. They supposed that the ferment and working of the "mystery of lawlessness" was the same as the appearance of the "lawless one" clothed with "all power and signs and lying wonders." The student should be careful not to fall into their error. In Nero we have the shadow of the coming rival of the Holy One, "who appeareth and exalteth himself above all that is called God." This much and no more; but as this much opens a dark page in the annals of the primitive Church, it is imperative, if we would understand her perilous position and perceive her providential preservation under the empire, that more than a cursory glance be bestowed on Nero's character and history.

No one could have been more unfortunate than he in his parents. He was in a very literal sense the child of lawlessness; for both his father and mother were moral anarchists. Domitius Ahenobarbus, who begot him, and the younger Agrippina, who bore him, were monsters of iniquity; and, as Domitius himself is reported as saying, what could be born of such a union but a hateful thing, perilous to the public safety! Strange is it to relate that he descended from the noble and virtuous Germanicus and the elder Agrippina, through whom he inherited the blood of Augustus. This noble couple offered a singular commentary on the doctrine of heredity; for their offspring, the first Nero, Drusus, and Gaius, and their daughters, Julia Livia, Drusilla, and the mother of Nero, were despicable and diabolical. By rights they ought to have been princes in character as well as in race; but, instead, they were as low and base as the meanest thief and assassin in the empire. Evidently contemptible children can proceed from honorable parents; and heredity, though admittedly a law, is perhaps of all laws the most eccentric and irregular in its operations.

There was little, if any, trace of the grandparents in the grandson. He was a natural deformity, whose early surroundings were unfavorable to any desirable change. Three years after his birth at Antium (December 15, 37 A. D.), his corrupt and vicious sire ceased to burden the earth with his presence. He died, and a year previous to his demise his wife, Agrippina, had been banished by order of her brother, the emperor Caligula, the impious madman who caused sacrifices to himself, his wife, and his horse, to be offered, and who in his frenzy would have decapitated the whole nation if he could have had all his subjects' necks combined in one. This desperate idiot suspected his sister of conspiracy, and sent her to Pontia, while her child, bereft of all property, was intrusted to the tender mercies of an aunt, who in her turn handed him over to the care of a barber and a dancer. There is something exceedingly pitiable in the condition of a helpless lad surrendered to the government of two slaves. The education he received from them could not have been of the highest, and yet, considering his receptivity, must have been of the most enduring kind. This separation from his mother came to an end with the death of Caligula (41 A. D.) and the accession of Claudius, the uncle of Agrippina. Being restored to her estates, she undertook herself to train her son, and acquired remarkable influence over him. All authorities concur in bearing witness to his physical beauty as a child, and his mother devoted herself to him with all the ferocious passion of a tigress for her cub. To call her feeling for him love is only to traduce that sacred emotion. It was rather a devouring flame, a wolf-like hunger, an inappeasable craving, a quenchless fire in which there was little of genuine affection. Love does not lie, scheme, plunder, murder, and commit nameless crimes for the temporal advancement of a child; for love sees, even when such acts achieve their immediate object, that they plunge the unhappy being who reaps their benefits in a black ocean of retribution, whose irresistible billows



AGRIPPINA .

overwhelm and crush. Agrippina sacrificed all the virtues to promote the fortunes of Nero, and in doing so she exiled them from his own character, and exposed him to the fury of their avenger.

She made up her mind that he, her darling, should be emperor. To accomplish her purpose, she set herself to work with all the shamelessness of a Clytemnestra, who murdered her husband, Agamemnon, and committed adultery with his cousin, Ægysthus. The wife of her uncle, Messalina, whose name is still a by-word and a hissing, stood in her way, and it is no more than probable that she helped to make palpable the vices of the wretched woman who shared the imperial throne. Her part in the events which led to the ruin of Messalina has never been clearly ascertained, but that she was no idle spectator to what took place may be inferred from the fact that she was anxious to succeed her in the royal affections. Scarcely three months passed away before the marriage she aspired to was accomplished. In 49 she wedded her uncle, Claudius, and was duly recognized as his consort in the government of the empire. Securely seated on the throne she began to employ all her arts to obtain for her son, Nero, the succession. She induced her husband to adopt him, to the political detriment of his son, Britannicus, the unfortunate child of Messalina; and she gained for him the hand of his daughter, Octavia; and yet to further her schemes ordered the execution of a rival, Lollia Paulina, drove Calpurnia from Rome, and the noble Silanus to commit suicide. Her wickedness prospered. She was honored with the title of Augusta, and exerted as much sovereign influence in the State as her sceptered lord. She appointed Seneca to be tutor and guardian of her boy, and had Afranius Burrus, a soldier devoted to her interests—probably for personal reasons, as she was fiercely attractive and not a niggard in caresses—placed near his person. Whatever could be safely done to humiliate Britannicus in the eyes of the people was unhesitatingly done. The lad was not only subject to slights in public, but he was watched and degraded in private. At last the wife plotted against the life of her husband. Claudius was too long reigning. The freedman, Pallas, was one of his staunchest supporters, and nothing could be accomplished against the master until the faithfulness of the servant was corrupted. The queen, therefore, wooed him to her arms by her wanton blandishments, and then compelled him to espouse the cause of her son. Having so good an ally, and having obtained poison from Locusta, with the aid of Halotus, the monarch's taster, and of Xenophon, his physician, she with her own hands gave the deadly drug, scientifically infused in a preparation of mushroom, to her unsuspecting husband.

"The king is dead; long live the king!" October 13, 54 A. D., was the ill-fated day that gave Nero to the throne of the world. With the news of Claudius' death Afranius Burrus, the prætorian præfect, appeared before the guard in company with the aspirant for imperial dignities, and a series of lies and large donations did the rest. The Senate confirmed the choice of the soldiers, and only a few inquired for Britannicus, and those leaders who might possibly grow into his friends were put out of the way. Marcus, the brother of Silanus, and Narcissus, who had manifested sympathy for the neglected child of Messalina, were murdered by order of Agrippina, and the slaughter would have continued had not Seneca and Burrus, the responsible supporters of the new reign, interposed. And the woman who inspired all these crimes, while her hands were yet wet with the blood of her many victims, was appointed to the high office of priestess at the altar of the deified emperor she had poisoned.

Born of lawless parents, exalted to the throne by lawless acts, and inaugurated amid lawless deeds, it is hardly surprising that Nero himself should be lawless. But it is difficult to realize the extent to which he carried lawlessness. In the words of Froude:

"Nero committed incest with his mother that he might realize the sensations of Œdipus, and murdered her that he might comprehend the situation of Orestes. Under Nero's fearful example the imperial court of Rome became a gilded brothel. Chastity was turned into a jest,

vice was virtue, and fame lay in excess of infamy. The wisest sank to the level of the worst. Seneca composed a vindication of the assassination of Agrippina, accusing her of having conspired against her son. The Senate decreed a thanksgiving to the gods for Nero's deliverance from Agrippina's treachery. The few honorable men, like Pætus Thrasea and Soranus, who refused to follow with the stream, were made away with; as if the emperor desired, in the tremendous language of Tacitus, *virtutem ipsam excindere*—to cut out virtue itself by the roots; and with a yet stranger appropriateness than even Tacitus could recognize, when Nero had set Rome on fire, he selected the Christian converts as scapegoats for his guilt."¹

But in his case, as in others, there seems to have been growth in crime. He was not infamous all at once. If the descent was rapid, it was due to the momentum imparted by the dizzy height he had reached. As a youth it is said he was amiable, and Seneca represents him as deploring that he had been taught to write when called on to sign a death warrant. The first five years of his reign were passed without serious outrage, and are designated by historians as the golden "*quinquennium Neronis*." Probably the credit for this comparatively halcyon period is due to the influence of Seneca, who had obtained considerable mastery over his royal pupil. But there are reasons for believing that he perceived the pent-up ferocity and indecent dissoluteness of his charge, and realized that it would be next to impossible for any human power to restrain them from ultimate outbreak. His apprehensions were only too speedily realized. Nero, who from the first shamefully neglected Octavia, his wife, was captivated by a Greek freedwoman, Acte, a beautiful and loyal soul. As long as she was mistress of his affections she held in check his cruel propensities, and to her honor be it recorded, that, though he discarded her, she remained faithful, and was the only one to care for his unfriended corpse. He abandoned her for a very different woman—Poppæa Sabina, the wife of an intimate companion, wealthy, cultured, imperious, and whose ambition was boundless. His love for her only intensified the conflict that had already sprung up between himself and his mother, who determined still to govern him, and threatened him with the possible rivalry of Britannicus to the throne. Her course was ill-advised. To her astonishment the son she had taught so well, and for whom she had sinned so repeatedly, poisoned Britannicus before her eyes. That was his answer. The mother had led her offspring to taste blood, and now that he had tasted it the tiger in him was not easily appeased. In a little while she herself felt his fang. Poppæa goaded him on. A woman's hand had exalted him to a throne, and now a woman's hand strikes down the instrument of his greatness; and she who had shown no mercy received none. And on a line with the appalling retribution that ever pursued the house of Cæsar, this same Poppæa, who had known no pity for a mother, was herself kicked to death when approaching motherhood by the imperial brute who had made her his wife.

We have no interest in perusing the narrative of his crimes. That he crushed out of life the line of Augustus and the descendants of the Claudii; that he defamed Octavia, and then ordered her execution; that he turned against his best friends, Burrus and Seneca; and that he reveled in blood and wallowed in lust, are facts that need no amplification to enhance their horror. From all that is known of his conduct it is plain that his character was a strange admixture of evil without any trace of good. He was childish and petulant to the last, self-willed and arrogant. His vanity was as conspicuous as his viciousness. Destitute of a high order of reasoning ability, and devoid of conscience, he was ever mastered by his passions. He craved flattery and was easily misled by praise. Much has been written about his devotion to art, and his desire to be counted not only a patron in certain directions, but a performer as well. He was enamored with the nude. He worshiped the indecent. He had little care for art apart from the sensual. But he could play, he could sing, he could recite, and when he, the master of the world, condescended to appear before Greek audiences, very naturally he was

¹ "Divus Cæsar," "Short Studies," Third Series, p. 269 of Amer. Ed.

awarded by that sagacious people all the prizes. He was a man with a few accomplishments and no graces, of some attainments but of no redeeming endowments. Haughty, suspicious, frivolous, contemptible, his name remains as a perpetual warning against power unchecked by constitutional rights, and against art uninfluenced by the pure ideals and lofty enthusiasm of morality and religion.

The year 64 A. D. proved to be a turning point in the career of Nero, and it became forever memorable in the history of the Church. On July 18th of that year the fire broke out that destroyed a large part of Rome, and in the glare of whose flames the kingdom of Christ was disclosed to public view as never before. Already had a large part of Pompeii been demolished by an earthquake, and the people were studying multiplied misfortunes as omens of approaching evil. When, therefore, the Circus Maximus, the Palatine, the Velia, the Aventine, and the Circus Flaminius, and the Via Lata were swept by the flames, and they raged along the Tiber and under the Servian wall, the citizens were horror-stricken, and saw in the ruin indubitable proof of the anger of the gods. Consternation prevailed. For some nine days in all the fire ravaged the city, leaving hardly any trace of the Temple of the Moon, the Temple of Jupiter Stator, the modest palace of Numa, and the altar of the Vestal Virgins, sweeping before it many of the trophies taken in war, and consuming many of the public records. It must have seemed to the populace that the furies were bent on devastating Rome, dealing with it more pitilessly than invading Gauls. Nero's connection with this calamity is one of the open questions of history. It is hardly credible that he should have been the incendiary. What could he hope to gain from a wild act, that not only imperilled the very existence of his capital, but jeopardized the lives of his subjects? He must have known that many would perish in the smoke and heat of a general conflagration, as multitudes did, and that there could be no compensation for so reckless a holocaust. And yet, however unreasonable such infamy seems, there were not lacking citizens to more than insinuate his guilt. Had he not intimated a desire to see a grander Rome rise on the demolition of old Rome's narrow and tortuous streets? Did he not ascend the Tower of Mæcenæ during the fire and expatiate on the beauty of the scene, and from the stage of his own theater, in appropriate costume, sing, "The capture of Ilium"? Was he not comparatively indifferent to the spread of the flames, and were not some of his own slaves detected in the act of setting fire to various buildings? And did he not hasten to seize more land than he could well have taken, had it not been cleared of structures by the conflagration, for the purpose of rearing his Golden House? On such questionings and rumors as these the dreadful accusation rested in the public mind, and if it did not take definite shape it was very commonly believed. It was, so to speak, in the air, and must have come to the attention of Nero himself; or, otherwise, how explain his anxiety to discover a pretext for fixing the blame on other parties?

In searching for some helpless victim or victims who could be made to suffer for the dastardly crime, his mind was directed to the harmless community known as Christians. I have ventured to say, directed, for it is not likely he would have thought of so obscure a body, unless some one near his person had taken pains to suggest that its members were obnoxious to the public, and could be maltreated without exciting much sympathy. It has been suggested that Poppæa was favorable to the Jews; that Acte, the Greek enchantress of her husband, had been won over to Christianity; and that, in her desire to have her rival slain, the empress had prompted Nero to avert suspicion from himself by punishing the followers of the Nazarene. If they were exterminated, the fascinating mistress would be included in the butchery, and that, too, without rousing the indignation of the tyrant. She would simply perish in the carnage, with no one responsible save the emperor himself. But all this reads more like the plot of a romance than the simple narrative of history; as does the tradition that Flavius Josephus was in Rome at the time of the disaster, and through court intrigues made it his business to strike a



NERO.

blow against the hated Galilean by incriminating his disciples. But, though we are in the dark as to the real instrument, we may be sure that someone inveighed against the Church, and insidiously influenced Nero to charge her with a hideous villainy foreign to her nature, and of which she could not have been the perpetrator.

Tacitus is the authority most generally followed by students of this period. In his pages we have a vivid description of the tragic events which grew out of the burning of Rome. Referring to the fact that Nero was determined to transfer the guilt of that horror to others, the historian writes:

"For this purpose he punished with exquisite torture a race of men detested for their evil practices, by vulgar appellation commonly called Christians." Here in contemptuous terms he alludes to the origin of this sect, and then continues: "Nero proceeded with his usual artifice. He found a set of profligate and abandoned wretches, who were induced to confess themselves guilty, and on evidence of such men a number of Christians were convicted, not, indeed, on clear evidence of their having set the city on fire, but rather on account of their alleged hatred of the whole human race. They were put to death with exquisite cruelty, and to their sufferings Nero added mockery and derision. Some were covered with the skins of wild beasts and left to be devoured by dogs; others were nailed to the cross; numbers were burnt alive; and many, covered over with inflammable matter, were lighted up, when the day declined, to serve as torches during the night. For the convenience of seeing this tragic spectacle, the emperor lent his own gardens [where Saint Peter's now lifts its mighty dome]. He added the sports of the circus, and assisted in person, sometimes driving a curicle, and occasionally mixing with the rabble in his coachman's dress. At length the cruelty of these proceedings filled every heart with compassion. Humanity relented in favor of the Christians."¹

Can imagination paint a more fearful picture? The deep blue of an Italian sky above, serene, deep, and calm, reproves by its reposeful splendor the wild orgies and passionate savagery of a heartless multitude. What a contrast! There blaze a thousand torches composed of writhing, shrieking human forms, clothed in shirts of tar, whose black, sickening smoke dreamily hangs over delightful gardens, and spreads itself out like a thin veil to hide the infamies of earth from the trembling stars in heaven. Hungry dogs howl and snarl in the neighborhood, and are let loose on helpless creatures covered with skins, while patricians and plebeians applaud and laugh as the blood, not of animals, but of fellow-beings, reddens the soil, and their lacerated flesh covers the ground. Women and children, as well as men, are devoted to torture, for the more tender the victim, the more sensitive to pain, and hence the greater amusement do they afford their tormentors. To see a man torn to pieces by famished brutes was a pleasure the average Roman prized; but to see the body of a woman, wet with blood, quivering in strange contortions, as the hounds bite and tear, was to his morbid æstheticism the most delightful of diversions. No favor, therefore, was shown to age or sex. All within reach who bore the hateful name of Christian were sought out, were driven along with blows and mockery, and were exposed to every insulting ignominy which might add to death the very pangs of hell. And chief among the persecutors, yea, *the* chief, stood Nero, the *pater patriæ*, with his once delicate features now bloated and coarse, and with his bloodshot, restless eyes, directing the butchery, and laughing more loudly than the rest when an unearthly, poignant wail gave evidence that some poor victim suffered more acutely than the rest. Is it strange that the early Church saw in the author of this pandemonium the very antichrist; or that Paul, who had looked him in the face, and had read there the proof of his sensuality and savagery, should have recognized him as the true forerunner and prototype of the "man of sin"?

But if he was the living prophecy and shadow of that world-spirit, whose vigorous hatred of spiritual religion should lead to deadly persecutions, and to boiling oil, blazing fagots, racks,

¹ Tacitus, "Annals," Book XV, xliv.

whips, and thumb-screws, as instruments for its suppression, he was likewise in the end the tragic example of its inevitable doom. For Nero to have prospered to the last, and to have gone into eternity quietly, as ordinary men, would have shaken the confidence of saint and sinner in the righteousness of the universe. If faith in a just God was to be preserved, this royal felon must be exposed even in this world, and in some measure receive the reward of his doings. The Church must have waited anxiously to see whether God had forgotten his law and its thunders. Nor had she long to wait. In 65 A. D. the tyrant discovered, or thought he did, a conspiracy against his rule, and this led to numerous executions. But the death of such men as Calpurnius Piso, Rufus, Lucan, and Seneca only increased the enemies of Nero's government. Scarcely had three years passed away when dissatisfaction broke out anew. Early in 68 A. D. Julius Vindex, Sulpicius Galba, Poppæa's former husband, and Marcus Otho, all bearing sway in various parts of the empire, appeared in open revolt. So portentous was this uprising that the Senate and people of Rome, wearied with the wastefulness and incapacity of Nero, slowly abandoned his cause. At the crisis of affairs, when he needed friends, he only found enemies, and when he should have acted with decision, he was the victim of uncertainty. Whom could he trust? He had always been selfishly bent on his own pleasure; who now would come to his relief? The murmurs of the populace reached him even in his Golden House, the building of which had involved him in many abominations, and which itself had witnessed as many. From the impending ruin he covertly escaped, and found a momentary refuge in a villa four miles from the city owned by the freedman, Phaon. He had reached the place and the hour (June 9th, 68 A. D.) of his death. No one displayed less heroism than he in presence of the inevitable. He secluded himself with only Sporus and Epaphroditus, two of his dependents, to comfort him. Knowing his peril he lost all dignity, talked incoherently of his artistic gifts and of their value to society, deplored their loss to the world, and suggested that he thought of killing himself artistically by ascending a funeral pyre and lighting it himself. These mumblings were suspended when the decree of the Senate reached him, that he should be scourged to death with rods, his head during the penalty being thrust into a fork. This threat seemed to rouse in him some sense of shame, and he called for two daggers, but had not strength of will to use either. But he cannot postpone fate. Already he hears the tramping of horse, and learns that a centurion has come to arrest him. With a cry of despair he strives to inflict the mortal blow, but hesitates, blunders, whimpers. Once more he essays the awful task, and this time with more effect, for Epaphroditus, in pity for the cowering wretch, somewhat roughly aids him to drive the dagger home. With a few convulsive gasps he falls back motionless, his features horribly distorted, and his dead eyes staring wildly and bulging out from their sockets. The few spectators turn with sickening loathing from the revolting sight, gladly leaving to poor Acte, the frail but devoted Greek, the sad duty of committing his abhorred remains to the vault of the Domitii on the Pincian Hill.

Thus was the black shadow of antichrist engulfed in the night of retributive perdition. But the substance survived, survived in the *Pontifex Maximus* on the imperial throne, and in other forms as yet shrouded in the future, but always breathing the same spirit of intolerance, oppression, and cruelty. The Church had passed through the preliminary stage of her great historic conflict, and had emerged from the comparative obscurity of Judea into the broad arena of the empire. She had drawn to herself by her heroism and patient suffering the attention of mankind. Henceforth she must become more than ever prominent, or altogether cease to be. Her resuscitation after the exterminating endeavors of her adversary would seem to many a miracle, approximating in moral significance to the resurrection of Christ. She herself would come to be amazed at the indestructibility of her life. The Neronian persecution taught her this on the threshold of her tumultuous career. It was a lesson needed to be learned. She saw the hand that had been raised against her smitten by Providence, and she herself, though

wounded and sore, unconquered and unconquerable. The coming years were dark with manifold and repellent forms of evil, and among them, towering over them, and more forbidding than the rest, the awful and iniquitous antichrist. But the dishonored Nero and her own deliverance inspired the Church to believe that, however fierce the warfare awaiting her, in the end the "son of perdition" would go to perdition, and she be brought off victorious through the grace of him whose sacred presence should sanctify and shield her in all the centuries.

CHAPTER II.

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.

FAMILIAR as we are with the proud eminence of Jerusalem, we naturally approach the story of its humiliation and fall with mingled feelings of surprise and horror. Dean Stanley suggests that its ruin is an event of the same character as the overthrow of Babylon, Nineveh, or of Rome; but, judged by its relation to the world's history, and especially to the emancipation and progress of Christianity, I am persuaded it is immeasurably more solemn and significant. From the series of disasters that befell the capital of the Jewish nation we perceive that privilege is no barrier against catastrophe. "Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell."¹ Apparently the higher the heaven the deeper the hell. Communities that are most conspicuously favored are in greater peril than others that have not attained any notable civilization, or any clear insight into divine truth. There are cities in China and India that have existed longer than any now flourishing in Europe or America, and it is not unlikely they will continue after London, New York, Paris, and Chicago have ceased to be centers of thought and activity. Their opportunities were never remarkable and their advantages were never distinguished. Consequently, their responsibilities were never very grave. Their guilt has been proportionately small, and they have not been liable to insurrections, upheavals, and calamities, which are fostered by a more advanced, complicated, and artificial condition of social life. Of all communities Jerusalem was the one most signally honored of Jehovah in the olden times. It was the seat of his spiritual government on earth; and there had been preserved the books of the law, and there had dwelt from immemorial antiquity the symbols of the sacred Presence. Concerning this place the Lord is represented as saying:

"I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem. Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts: My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem."² To this hallowed spot came the prophets and teachers whose words have illuminated mankind, and along its streets and within the shadow of its Temple porch moved Christ and his apostles, whose wisdom and work have transformed society. Privileges so exceptional entailed obligations equally exalted, and dangers equally serious and imminent. As with separate individuals, so with organized companies of individuals. The human unit is often inclined to construe personal elevation into exemption from the law of duty. Being beyond others in possessions and in power, he may presume to be less bounden than others to administer his stewardship according to the will of God. Thus likewise have many cities erred, and thus erred Jerusalem. She was haughty in the extreme. Blessed exceedingly, she seemed to imagine that the favors she enjoyed were for herself, and

¹ Matthew xi, 23.

² Zechariah i, 16, 17.

for herself alone. The intoxication of pride blinded her eyes to her real dependence on the Almighty. She arrayed herself against his providences, disputed his decisions, and dared to set herself directly in the path of progress. God bore long with her, but when she stubbornly interposed her rancorous bigotry and rigid ritualism in the way of spiritual advancement, she pronounced her own doom. The Light of Life must be quenched or she must be crushed.

While it is true that wicked cities are overthrown by the direct judgment of the Almighty, it is not to be denied that generally they are the instruments of their own undoing. They become the unconscious executioners of the divine vengeance, and by the very acts that arouse retributive justice. It is not necessary to send panoplied hosts from heaven to chastise and punish the wrongdoer; for his own sins wield the scourge and the ax more implacably than ever the dreaded Venetian Council of Ten. Vicious men and vicious communities are their own destroyers. Through its own anarchic forces Roman liberty expired, and beneath the weight of its own iniquities Roman imperialism broke down. The invasions of Goths, Huns, Vandals, would have been impossible, or at most harmless, had not wasteful vices impoverished and weakened the empire, and shattered its unity. Jerusalem also was her own assassin. Before the armies of Vespasian and Titus encamped on the ridge of Scopus, or on the top of the Mount of Olives, she had pronounced sentence on herself, and had commenced her last act of desperate self-murder. Jerusalem did not go down in a fierce conflict between right and wrong, loyalty and treason, purity and impurity, faith and unbelief, honor and dishonor. No, it was wrong struggling with wrong, treason with treason, unbelief with unbelief. There was no honor, no purity; only chaotic turbulence of evils, biting, tearing, but alas! not annihilating, one another. In the earthquake and cyclone of fanaticism, bigotry, oppression, and sanguinary cruelty, provoked by long years of narrowness, exclusiveness and hollow pretentiousness, was swallowed up the grandeur of Jerusalem, and her career as the chosen city of God was forever ended.

This tremendous catastrophe, so revolutionary in its effect on the religious life of the world, and constituting, as it does, one of the supreme moments and turning points in human history, cannot be too frequently or too carefully examined. To understand its relation to what followed, an adequate view of the calamity itself is necessary. I can only regret that the limits of this volume do not permit ampler latitude for the complete reproduction of a scene so appallingly terrific and so sublimely suggestive. The Master's pathetic description on the sad fate in store for Jerusalem is most graphic in its portrayal, and what we now know of the fulfillment of the prophecy enables us to realize the fitness of the melancholy language: "And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."¹

Perhaps the real beginning of this tribulation may be traced to the year 40 A. D., when the reigning Cæsar—Caligula—decreed that his effigy should be placed in the Temple. Before this proposed act of desecration, the Jews had manifested uneasiness and restlessness under the Roman yoke. Revolutionary acts by Judas of Galilee, and revolutionary teachings by Matthias Ben Margaloth, and riots inspired by zealots or sicarii, fostered dissatisfaction, and were ominous of more serious disturbances. But all of these outbreaks had been easily composed. While they occasioned anxiety, they were not regarded as grave enough to cause alarm. The authorities were sleeping on a mine, and the explosion was hastened if not consummated by the madness of the emperor. "His insane vanity," to employ the speech of Dean Milman, "made him attempt to enforce from the whole empire those divine honors which his predecessors consented to receive from the willing adulation of their subjects." The Jews in Egypt and Palestine were horrified at the blasphemy, and sent deputies to remonstrate. According to

¹ Matthew xxiv, 19-21.

Philo, who was one of the embassy from Alexandria, the emperor dealt with the suppliants in the most flippant and contemptuous manner. He chided them for not acknowledging his divinity, while they worshiped a deity whose name they dared not pronounce. When they humbly reminded him that they had "offered sacrifices *for* him," he insolently replied that they had failed "to sacrifice *to* him." And then while the court was convulsed with laughter he sharply inquired, "Why they refused to eat pork?" With cynical banter he tormented his visitors, and then, as he abruptly dismissed them, was heard to remark: "Well, they are not very bad. They only seem to be a poor, foolish people who cannot believe I am a god." Evidently he regarded this inability as a sign of mental imbecility. For a moment he commiserated their infirmity. But the compassionate mood did not continue long. A Sidonian workman was ordered to make an immense statue of the emperor, and Petronius was commanded to erect it in the Temple at Jerusalem. The tidings of the purposed profanation moved the people of the city to grief and indignation. Thousands of citizens sought the representative of government at Tiberias, and prostrating themselves they implored him to desist, avowing themselves prepared to be massacred and determined not to infringe their law. The prefect paused irresolute. For a few weeks the suspense continued. But it was unexpectedly brought to a close by the courageous blow of Cassius Chærea, who delivered the empire from its fiendish and crazy ruler. While the excitement was allayed, and while order outwardly was practically restored, the breach made by the Roman contempt of things most sacred to the Jew was never to be healed. Sullen discontent characterized the people. They had been insulted too ruthlessly ever to forget or forgive. Some seven years passed without serious disorder. The peace, however, was temporarily broken by Ventidius Cumanus, who, in 49 A. D., permitted his soldiers in the Antonia and the temple cloisters during the passover. A riot ensued. From 10,000 to 20,000 were killed, most of them being trodden to death in the unavoidable confusion and crush. Soon after this sad event there were rumors in circulation of approaching Messiahs, and conflicts became more frequent between priests and citizens. The Sicarii, assassins, became more prominent, secret meetings were multiplied, and a patriot party slowly emerged from the gloom and increasing anarchy.

At this most critical juncture, when the greatest care was necessary to preserve order, and when wisdom and humanity were needed, Nero appointed a procurator like unto himself, Gessius Florus, and the smoldering fires were very rapidly fanned into an uncontrollable conflagration. This injudicious appointment occurred in 65 A. D., the season of strange signs and omens. It was reported that during the Passover of that year a mysterious light had shone in the holiest of all for three hours near the midnight darkness. Later on, witnesses declared that the magnificent gates of brass which required a score of men to open, rolled back silently on their hinges; while at the pentecostal festival the priests had been startled by the sound of departing deities. These narratives, however legendary, at least go to prove that the hearts of the children of men were full of apprehension, and were "failing them for fear." And the weird figure that appeared and reappeared during these fateful times, uttering its pathetic wail — "Woe to the city! woe to the Temple! A voice from the East! A voice from the West! A voice from the four winds! A voice against Jerusalem and the Temple! A voice against bridegroom and bride! A voice against all the people!" — was only a striking individual expression of the grim forebodings that haunted the inhabitants of the doomed city. If the story of this melancholy fanatic is to be regarded as fictitious, it yet goes to show how deep and general were the misgivings and dread of the population that found embodiment in so gloomy a myth. On the other hand, if the account is to be accepted as substantially true, then history furnishes another instance in which one man gathers up in his personal consciousness the horrors and calamities of an epoch, as Ezekiel seems to have done, and gives to them in his own sad life both shape and speech. As it is the distinction of representative men that the

genius of their age, or, if the term be preferred—the *zeitgeist*—is concentrated in them and reigns in them, so in this grim, specter-like prophet there was ever present the siege of Jerusalem, with its butcheries, famine, and incendiarism, and in his tragic end, crushed to death by a stone from a Roman catapult as he uttered the pathetic cry, “Woe, woe to me also!” the final crash and desolation were not inadequately portrayed.

Shakspeare writes, in Richard II. :

“The bay trees in our country are all wither’d,
The meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven;
The pale-fac’d moon looks bloody on the earth,
And lean-look’d prophets whisper fearful change;
Rich men look sad, and ruffians dance and leap.”

And signs as portentous as these filled the Jewish mind with inquietude and dismay, for

“By a divine instinct, men’s minds mistrust
Ensuing danger; as, by proof, we see
The water swell before a boist’rous storm.”

Nor did the storm long delay its coming. Gessius Florus seemed to be cursed with the faculty of misrule. From the moment he assumed command in Palestine he evinced a settled determination to stir up strife, and to enrich himself through the very disorders he had fomented. He surrounded himself with legionaries consisting largely of Syrians from Cæsarea, and Samaritans from Sebaste, nationalities peculiarly obnoxious to the Jews, and in the conflicts which followed there appeared to be reproduced on a larger scale scenes of race animosity enacted in the days of Nehemiah. The mischievous governor did not hesitate to excite the hatred of their traditional enemies against them, and the unhappy descendants of Abraham found themselves plundered and insulted, and with no possibility of redress. It was in vain that they appealed for protection to Cestius Gallus, the ruler of Syria. His visit to Jerusalem, 66 A. D., and his judicial inquiry, resulted in no relief, but only roused the malignant anger of Florus. He lost no time after the departure of Gallus in taking his revenge. With a large body of troops he approached the city demanding seventeen talents in the name of the emperor. This requisition was turbulently resisted, and the procurator pushed forward and occupied the Herodian palace. He was in a position to control a portion of the city and inflict damage on many of its citizens. He was not inclined to mercy. His soldiers were allowed to pillage where they could, and in the tumult over 3,000 persons perished. The massacre was so pitiless that Queen Bernice, at the time residing in the Asmonean palace, came barefoot to intercede. Her tears and prayers availed not. Florus was obdurate. He ruthlessly pursued his advantage until he was unexpectedly checked. The patriot party, driven to desperation, barred his way through the old city to the tower of Antonia. Slowly he fell back before the furious courage of the people, and, having incited the citizens to overt acts of rebellion, he retreated to Cæsarea. While some efforts were made toward reconciliation, their futility soon became apparent. Eleazar, son of Ananias, raised the standard of revolt and around him gathered the Zealots and Sicarii. Allegiance to Rome was renounced. Sacrifices offered for the emperor came to an end, and further tribute to the treasury of the imperial government was openly refused. There was now no path of compromise possible. Hence young Eleazar and his friends moved forward to obtain entire control of the city. A moderate or temporizing body of citizens sought to frustrate their purpose, possibly because they saw the hopelessness of the movement, and possibly because of local dissensions. The high priest was chief of the important faction who seemed to desire peace at any price. He did his best to stem the tide of rebellion. Impossible! The floods swept over and away all barriers. He himself was overwhelmed. The insurgents assailed the loyalists with tremendous energy and ferocity. They were irresistible. Everywhere the friends

of submission to Rome were discomfited. The high priest and his brother sought refuge from the tempest in an aqueduct, where they were found and ruthlessly murdered. Herod's palace was captured and the garrison put to the sword. Even the trained soldiers of Cestius could not withstand the fury of the rebels. That commander, learning from spies the true condition of things in Jerusalem, advanced with a large force from Scopus to support the allies of his government. The walls of the city rose before him and his army, and he directed an immediate assault. But his men were beaten at every point, and after several futile attempts he was obliged to withdraw. The insurgents were elated. The retreat of the eagles roused the courage and the enthusiasm of Judah's lion. A pursuit was ordered. Through the gates swarmed the heroic patriots, and, to the amazement of the civilized world, having overtaken the enemy, they engaged him in a pitched battle, and inflicted on the Romans a defeat at once decisive and humiliating.

This battle was fought in the autumn of 66 A. D. Revolt was victorious all along the line. The Jewish State had declared and, for the time being, had maintained its freedom and independence. It had reasserted its autonomy, and, notwithstanding domestic foes, had succeeded in beating back the power that challenged its rights of sovereignty. The civil war had begun. Conciliation was impossible. Only the sword could now settle the long-pending dispute between Rome and Jerusalem, and by its decision determine the spiritual, and even the social, future of mankind.

Nero placed the sword in the hand of Vespasian. That consummate soldier was in disgrace because he had not applauded at the right time when his royal master was performing, or had inconsiderately nodded in somnolent weariness when he was particularly brilliant in some artistic exhibition—or thought himself so. The command offered was consequently a surprise. It was not refused; and accompanied by his son, Titus, Vespasian, March, 67 A. D., put himself at the head of the legions and marched from Antioch on the doomed city.

But by this time the whole of Palestine was in revolt. At Jerusalem an autonomous government had been created. The chief magistrates were the younger Hanan and Joseph Ben Gorion. A council composed of representative nobles aided them. The outlying regions were arranged into military districts, Gamala and Galilee being assigned to Flavius Josephus, to whose "Jewish Wars" and "Autobiography" all subsequent historians have been indebted for most of the material used by them in accounts of this sanguinary period. Therefore, Vespasian found himself practically opposed by the entire country, and not merely by its capital.

Siege follows siege. To reach Jerusalem the invaders have to wade through the blood of slain and mutilated thousands. Gadara falls and indiscriminate massacre follows. For forty-six days Josephus defends Jotapata at a loss of nearly a thousand men each day, and when at last the stronghold succumbs through betrayal, the flames devour what catapults and balistæ had failed to destroy. The awful list of the dead continues to increase. At Askelon 10,000 are killed, at Japha 27,000, at Joppa 8,400, at Taricheæ 6,000, at Giscala a similar number, while from Gamala only two women escape, and this leaves uncounted the multitudes of Jews tortured, scourged, and sent to mines or amphitheaters to expiate their heroism in a lingering or horrible death. Victory becomes monotonous. Warfare changes its character. It is no longer the grim rivalry of hostile but noble powers. Its soldiers are butchers and its deeds are only paralleled in the shambles. Judea is converted by the Romans into a human abattoir, and everywhere the smell of blood and of putrefying bodies taints the air. And yet, this is only the beginning of horrors.

A pause occurred occasioned by the death of Nero (68 A. D.), an event that involved the empire itself in factional strife. Vindex, Galba, Vitellius, and Otho, like phantoms, appeared and faded away, and the air resounded with prætorian shouts of insolence and trembled with the moans of murdered emperors. During these agitations Vespasian suspended his operations



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VESPASIAN.

against Jerusalem, and withdrew to Alexandria, where he could observe the movements of hostile parties, and be prepared to assert his own pretensions to the throne. The propitious hour arrived. It sounded with the elevation of Aulus Vitellius, who had been intimate with Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero, and had shared their infamies. When he was proclaimed emperor by a wild, licentious, and brutal soldiery, it seemed that all hope of reform was at an end. He was known for his luxurious tastes, and his extreme extravagance, and for his lack of moral fiber. So weak and despicable was he that when enemies confronted him in arms he slunk abashed into some low hiding place, and as Tacitus says, "Had not others remembered he had been an emperor, he would have forgotten it himself." As he was driven down the *Germaniæ Scale*, sinking beneath violent blows and opprobrious epithets, and crying out reproachfully: "And yet I was once your emperor," Vespasian was invested with the purple. He differed radically in character from his easy and voluptuous predecessor. In manners he was simple, frugal, blunt. Tacitus condemns him for his parsimonious and grasping avarice, a charge not sustained by Suetonius. He has been described as superstitious. While harsh and obdurate, he seems to have had no heart for actual persecution, and is reported to have answered, when the remarks of an enemy were repeated to him: "I will not kill a dog that barks at me." His death was as unpretentious as his life. When nearing his end, he uttered ironically: "Methinks I am becoming a god," and then added somewhat grimly, "An emperor should die standing." Such a ruler would hardly be the one to give his enemies rest, or brook antagonism to his authority. Almost immediately after Vespasian had entered Rome (70 A. D.) and had received the homage of the Senate, he forwarded orders to his son Titus at once to invest and reduce Jerusalem.

The two years that had elapsed since the interruption of the war had witnessed many strange and terrible scenes in the wretched city. Its condition had steadily been growing more and more intolerable. The population was divided under the rival leadership of John of Giscala and of Simon Ben Gioras. Fights had been of frequent occurrence in the streets, and at one time 30,000 Idumeans were secretly introduced into the city for the purpose of massacring the inhabitants who were supposed to be hostile to the schemes of Giscala. Josephus says: "The Idumeans fell upon the people as a flock of profane animals and cut their throats." A carnival of anarchy prevailed. The administration of two years previous had been violently overturned, and most of its members executed or assassinated. Headship was gone altogether, or was furnished only by the Zealots, a headship intoxicated with blood, wild, frantic, and delirious. Everywhere outrages were perpetrated. The air was contaminated by the decaying bodies of the unburied dead, and harvests were ungathered and were rotting in the fields, and over the entire land hung an atmosphere of malaria and death. Moreover the metropolis was overcrowded. Multitudes had flocked thither for protection, and small armies had been gathered from outlying districts for partisan purposes. Pilgrims had also journeyed to Jerusalem from various parts of the world for the commemoration of the Passover. Josephus estimates the number of those who perished during the siege at 1,100,000; and from these figures an impression may be formed of the vast population that must have been filled with consternation at the approach of Titus and his legions.

The military force at the disposal of the emperor's son and general was, according to some writers 30,000, according to others 80,000. But whatever its size events proved that it was equal to the awful task assigned to it. The army was arranged in three divisions, the first resting on Scopus, north of the city; the second in the rear, and the third on the summit of the Mount of Olives. Lines of circumvallation were drawn round the city, which prevented provisions from entering and deserters from escaping. Many who sought to flee from the impending collapse of the Jewish State fell into the hands of the enemy and were scourged and crucified, or were sold into slavery. Meanwhile famine spread rapidly within the walls.

Wholesome food speedily vanished, and the people, who had ever been scrupulous in their diet, were glad to feed on unclean things and even on human flesh. Mothers devoured the bodies of their own babes, and famished wretches struggled for uncooked morsels which dogs would disdain to eat. The streets were soon littered with the dead, and the breath of pestilence decimated the ranks of the defenders. Everywhere in the city were fierce despair, frantic courage, reckless furiousness, curses, blasphemy, and unreason. No one was able to think. Rival leaders, united by a common peril, inspired their soldiers to indescribable heroism, and however John of Giscala and Simon Ben Gioras lacked wisdom, they certainly were not cowards. In the darkness and chaotic convulsions of this cruel period, they flamed forth, incoherent indeed in counsel, but mighty and terrible in battle.

But their impetuous daring was in vain, and the delirium of their followers useless; and as a warning and presage of the inevitable disaster awaiting the entire community on July 17, 70 A. D., for the first time in 500 years, the daily sacrifice ceased. There were no animals to offer and no priests to serve at the altar. Could the starving and war-harassed citizens have been able to reflect on the significance of what was occurring, they would have seen in this cessation of sacrifice the handwriting on the wall announcing the final and total abrogation of the Mosaic economy, with all its covenants, ceremonies, and exalted privileges. And as Cyrus was girded, unknown to himself, by God to execute the divine decree against Babylon, so Titus was the appointed instrument through whom should be brought to an end an order of things no longer useful, and which, like a floating wreck at sea, imperiled the safety of a nobler voyager.

Titus directed his operations against Jerusalem from the north. After destroying the timber and fences so as to have a clear space for manœuvring, an attack was made on a weak place in the outer wall near the tomb of John Hyrcanus. The desperate valor of the besieged made the Romans pay dearly for their success. After a prolonged struggle, the wall was gained, but every foot of ground on the other side was contested. There were tortuous and narrow lanes in which the Jews fought to great advantage, but they were compelled at last to retreat before the superior discipline of the invaders. The second wall shared the fate of the first, and the hour had arrived for a general assault. It is generally believed that Titus gave orders that the Temple buildings were not to be injured. His precautions, however, were disregarded.

Early in August the army moved impetuously forward, and soon occupied the outer court of the Temple. On the tenth of that month the Jews made a sortie in the hope of regaining what they had lost. They were repulsed. As they retreated the slaughter was fearful, and in the excitement a Roman soldier tossed a firebrand into a building annexed to the sacred house, and in a few moments the splendid structure was in flames. From the fire some of the treasure and several of the vessels of the sanctuary were saved, but the House of the Lord was gutted, blackened, and to all intents and purposes destroyed. The fighting was not ended. The upper part of the city still held out, and there John and Simon maintained their post with splendid generalship and courage. They would give heed to no terms of capitulation that did not secure to them their freedom and the lives of their wives and children. September 7th, 70 A. D., witnessed the close of the protracted conflict. The assault was ultimately successful. The defenseless and ruined city was handed over to the legionaries. It was pastime to them to lacerate, scourge, torture, to abuse women and children, to mock and insult defeated men. They rioted in massacre and fire, and, like an army of incarnate devils loosed from hell, they revelled in savagery and regarded no punishment too severe to inflict on the people who had bravely defended their homes and national aspirations. Josephus informs us that the demolition of the city was so thorough that it was not easy to believe it had ever been inhabited. It was, indeed, depopulated and left desolate. Many of the citizens were crucified; many were sold into slavery; many were doomed to the Egyptian mines; and some, like the famous captains, John and Simon, were reserved to grace the triumph of the victor at Rome. But

even in humiliation and shame hope was not altogether extinguished. As thunders reverberate after the lightning, and as echoes of the thunder follow thunder, so a few fanatical souls, clinging to the idea of a renewed Jewish government, awakened recollections of the heroic defense of Jerusalem by occasional outbreaks, culminating in the uprising of Bar-Cocheba (132 A. D.), who attempted to rebuild the Temple and restore the nation. His revolt resulted in the loss of over half a million of people, and proved a disastrous failure. It only added to the burdens and sufferings of the devoted patriots. The usual barbarities were perpetrated. Then Hadrian, to remove, if possible, the occasion of such outbreaks, demolished all that was left of Jerusalem, drove a plough through the soil where God's house had stood, and to render the obliteration complete founded a new city on the site of the old, bearing the heathenish name of *Ælia Capitolina*, thus implying that Jupiter had conquered Jehovah. Then, even the echoes of the thunder died into silence, and the great city, the "joy of the whole earth," had ceased to be a factor in the world's progress. Its history was ended, its vocation finished, and its glory departed.

The night of devastation recalls the tender and reproachful words of Jesus; and little imagination is needed to picture the return of his Holy Shade to a locality he had loved so well, and, as he wanders up and down the silent and forsaken streets, to fancy that his sweet, impassioned voice murmurs the requiem as of old: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."¹

Happy the civilization, the organization, the philosophy, the creed that knows when its work is done, and is willing gracefully to be embalmed with the Pharaohs in the Pyramids of the ages. Sometimes communities, institutions, and even men, war against destiny. They insist on seeming to live, when, in fact, like one of the striking characters in fiction, they have been "for a very long time dead." Despotic governments, both secular and ecclesiastical, never appear to realize when they have fallen into imbecility and contempt. Dogmas go on reaffirming themselves when they have ceased to be subjects of intelligent inquiry, and superstitions reenact themselves when they have lost all hold on conscience and belief. Potentates and hierarchies go through the farce of repeating pretentious formularies which are no longer credible under the sun, apparently oblivious — perhaps willingly so — to the immense distance that separates modernism from medievalism. They are warned by a benignant Providence against the mistakes they are committing. The new light struggles for entry through the old shutters; and the new spirit claims admittance, as the ambassador of progress, to the audience chamber of the decrepit past, seeking to enthrone itself in the earnest present. Knowledge clamors for recognition in the domains of Turkey, and liberty and the right of man are seeking a quiet home beneath the wintry skies of Russia. The arts and sciences are unwilling to be excluded from China; and everywhere now, as in bygone ages, opportunity offers itself to those who are willing to embrace its advantages. England has prospered and maintained her foremost rank among the nations of the world by the hospitality she has shown to advanced thought and advanced enterprise. While conservative in many things, she has evinced a remarkable degree of pliability in others, and a facile power of adaptation to new developments and conditions. America also welcomes the light, accommodates herself to change, and generously accepts the conclusions of the new era. These countries, therefore, are in no immediate danger of serious convulsions, or of calamitous upheavals. They are continually "revolutionizing themselves by reform," and are not under the necessity of trying "to reform themselves by revolution."

But it is very different with despotic governments, and with hard unyielding institutions. They are in constant peril of violent disruption. Their usefulness is past. Their mission is

¹ Matthew xxiii, 37, 38.

ended. Earth is wearied with them. They have outlasted their time. They are skeletons insisting on governing living flesh and blood. Providence graciously makes this plain to them. Eloquently it proclaims them cumberers of the ground. It explains what they ought to do, and how to do it. But it will not continue forever to plead. The crisis and the crash must come. The furies will be loosed in a little while, and all that restricts and hinders the growing hopes and aims of humanity will be mercilessly swept away as chaff before the cyclone.

Here we lay bare the secret of Jerusalem's disappearance from history. God had shown exceptional favor; and when the period arrived for the redemption of the world — meaning by the phrase not merely the redemption of the individual, but of society as well — he proposed to begin with her, delivering her from her dead formalism, her consuming vanity, her domestic and civic iniquities, and her religious pretenses and shams. She would not believe that her vocation was gone, and that a new and higher stage of spiritual progress had been reached. In her pride she refused to see the unfitness of herself and of the instruments at her command for the molding of the race. She would rather compress mankind to her narrowness than enlarge herself to its inevitable expansiveness. Christ came to her first, offered to her the primacy of the coming age, but she would not. Leadership of the future required that she should break with the past. This she would not consent to do. She closed her eyes to the signs of the times, raged in her heart against her truest friend, and then in a paroxysm of cruel bigotry doomed Jesus to the cross.

But still God bore with her. He gave Jerusalem further opportunity — opportunity to deliberate, and to come into harmony with his gracious purposes. He dealt with her as in some degree excusable for rejecting the testimony of a prophet, who was lowly born, and who gathered around him no imposing array of force and wealth. But after the resurrection of Christ his measures became more decisive and severe. The Master himself had said: "If they [the Jews] believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead;" and his solemn prediction was only too surely fulfilled. They would not be persuaded. Though before their eyes were wrought the marvels of Pentecost; though they witnessed the wonders accomplished through the name of the risen Christ; and though they heard of the success attending the Gospel in other lands, they would not believe. In their midst was planted the first Christian community, and they were able to study its programme and observe its activities, and thus see in working order the ideal kingdom Christ had preached and which he had invited them to adopt. Jerusalem was incorrigible. She would not admit that she had been superseded in the world's religious training. Her ancient dignity she would not surrender, and she would exterminate all who dared to aspire to be her successors. Hence the tumults and persecutions recorded in the Book of Acts, and hence the martyrdom of Saint James, our Lord's brother (63 A. D.), as given in Josephus and Hegesippus. This apostle was one of the saintliest of men. He had been a Nazarite from his youth, and was honored and venerated for his strict, abstemious, and upright life. As his father, Joseph, was called "a just man," so he likewise earned the same high praise and was termed by friends and foes alike "the Just." According to Hegesippus, this was the apostle "who is wont to go alone into the sanctuary, and is found prostrate in prayer, so that his knees have grown hard and worn like a camel's, because he is ever kneeling and worshiping God, and asking forgiveness for the people." Tradition has it that he was even allowed, "like the high priest, to wear on his forehead the *petalon*, the plate of gold on which is inscribed Holiness to the Lord." His martyrdom occurred during the official service of Hanan, the younger, who was himself high priest, and the son of priestly Annas of Gospel fame, and who came to a miserable end in the calamities which engulfed Jerusalem. Milman has shown that this successor to his father evidently was directing a persecution against the Christians of Jerusalem, and that Saint James fell a victim to his exterminating policy.¹ Of the particulars concerning his death we have

no exact information. The account given by Josephus is not very full, and that which is furnished by Hegesippus is not very reliable. Still, as the latter is picturesque and doubtless preserves to us the spirit of the scene, if not the exact circumstances of the tragedy, it may be quoted here, as it has been by nearly every historian who has written on this period. I do not give the entire section, but only this extract:

"When many, therefore, even of the rulers were believing, there was an alarm amongst the Jews, and scribes, and Pharisees, saying: 'The whole people is in danger of falling into the expectation of Jesus as the Christ.' They came, therefore, to James and said, 'We beseech thee, restrain the people, for it has gone astray after Jesus, as though he were the Christ; we beseech thee to persuade all that come to the passover concerning Jesus, for to thee we all give heed, for we and the whole nation bear witness to thee that thou art just and receivest not the person of men. Do thou, therefore, persuade the multitude not to be deceived concerning Jesus, for the whole people and all men give heed to thee. Stand, therefore, on the pinnacle of the Temple, that thou mayest be visible from above, and that all thy words may be well heard by all the people, for on account of the passover all the tribes, with the Gentiles also, have come together.' The aforesaid scribes and Pharisees, therefore, placed James on the pinnacle of the Temple, and cried to him and said: 'O Just one, to whom we all ought to give heed, inasmuch as the people is gone astray after Jesus who is crucified, tell us what is the gate of Jesus?' And he answered with a loud voice, 'Why ask ye me concerning Jesus, the Son of Man? He sits in heaven on the right hand of the Mighty Power, and he is also about to come in the clouds of heaven.' And many being convinced and glorifying Jesus on the testimony of James, and saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David'; then, again, the same scribes and Pharisees said amongst themselves, 'We have done ill in furnishing so great a testimony to Jesus, let us go and east him down, that they may be struck with fear, and so not believe on him.' And they cried, saying, 'Oh! oh! the Just one, too, is gone astray.' And they fulfilled the prophecy written in Isaiah, 'Let us take away the Just, for he is troublesome to us, therefore shall they eat the fruit of their deeds.' They went up then and threw down the Just one and said, 'Let us stone James, the Just,' and they began to stone him. For he had not been killed by the fall, but turning round knelt and said, 'I beseech thee, Lord God, and Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' But whilst they were thus stoning him, one of the priests of the sons of Rechab, the sons of Rechabim, who are mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah, cried, saying, 'Stop, what do ye? The Just one prays for you!' and one of them, one of the fullers, took the club with which he used to press the clothes, and struck it on the head of the Just one. And so he bore witness, and they buried him on the place by the Temple, and the pillar still remains on the spot of the Temple. He has been a true witness both to Jews and Gentiles that Jesus is the Christ. And immediately"—that is, a few years later—"Vespasian besieged them."²

Significant words! They mark the climax of guilt and the end of forbearance. The venerable chronicler evidently sees a connection between the martyrdom of James and the success of the Roman arms. Jerusalem in destroying the Just one had finally adjudged itself unworthy of eternal life, and had disclosed its utter disqualification to serve God and humanity; and, therefore, as the past mission was ended, and the new one it could not discharge, and presumptuously determined to prevent others from assuming its glorious responsibilities, the city was abandoned to its enemies.

The bondage of Jerusalem meant the emancipation of Christianity. As the walls, palaces, and Temple of the former succumbed to the flame, the spiritual magnitude, and especially the universality, of the latter stood out in the light. As the material crumbled into ashes, the immaterial became more clear and radiant. Up to this time the shadow of Judaism had rested

¹ "History of Christianity," Vol. I, p. 441.

² Eusebius, H. E., II, 23.

on the Church. The period covered by the Acts of the Apostles makes very plain that the followers of Christ had not entirely broken with Mosaism, and that some of them considered the new economy only as a school or sect of the new. Believers do not forswear their circumcision, and it becomes a question whether Gentile converts ought not to be circumcised as well as baptized. Saint James, though he was in favor of liberty for the Gentile converts, was himself a strict observer of Temple rites and services to the close of his life. But the true breadth and scope of Christianity was from the first apprehended and openly proclaimed by Saint Paul. Saint Peter was not as radical as his brother apostle on this point, while Saint James was more conservative than Saint Peter.

In the epistles we have frequent references to Judaizing teachers. They were intent on imposing a yoke on the brethren of other nationalities. Moreover, from the use of the synagogues in the earlier stages of Christian dissemination, and from the observance of vows, even by Saint Paul himself, I am led to the conclusion that up to the destruction of Jerusalem churches were not distinctively outside organizations, but were rather communities, with their own peculiar spiritual life, beliefs, and practices, within the pale of Judaism. The relation between them may, perhaps, be sufficiently illustrated by a brief reference to the Lollards, the Quietists, and the Wesleyan Holy Club. These bodies existed originally as groups or associations inside the ecclesiastical fellowship to which they respectively belonged. The Lollards at the first never contemplated severance from the Church of Rome, nor the Holy Club from the Church of England. While I do not claim that the analogy is perfect, yet it affords a proximate idea of the position of primitive churches in relation to Judaism. They had not repudiated all connection with the old faith; they sought self-development rather within than without the Jewish fold, and were more or less conscious of restrictions and hindrances consequent on an influence from which they hardly knew how to deliver themselves. What would have been the issue had Jerusalem and the Temple been preserved can only be conjectured; but the result of their ruin was almost immediately apparent. The churches emerged from the shadow of legalism, and from the narrowing power of local circumstances and local traditions. As the fires of sacrifice were extinguished, as there were no longer holy places or holy houses, as the priesthood was annihilated by death, and as the chosen race was evidently cast off, at least for the time being, and its privileges annulled, the logic of history confirmed what our Savior had taught: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."¹ Affiliation with the synagogue now necessarily ceased. The Pagan world began to perceive that Christianity was not a sect of an old cult, but a new religion altogether, while Christianity itself began to comprehend more fully the universality of its spirit, its ideas and mission. This was a tremendous gain. The Church as a whole gained in moral grandeur, and, disengaged from entangling alliances, was free to enter on her career of expansion and conquest.

It may be of interest to the reader to know what became of the Church planted in Jerusalem. Eusebius chronicles the marvel "of a certain oracle given to her leaders by revelation," whereby they were warned to escape, as Lot from Sodom, from the guilty and wretched city. How Christ's followers were able to effect their deliverance is one of the secrets of history. Unquestionably they fled across the Jordan to the little Perea town of Pella. An opportunity for flight may have occurred during the suspension of hostilities, when Vespasian withdrew to watch his opponents from Alexandria. But, whatever the occasion, the disciples abandoned the spot stained with the blood of their Lord and his faithful witnesses. In their quiet retreat they continued unmolested; and when Hadrian reared his *Ælia Capitolina* their successors were permitted to return, which would not have been allowed had they not renounced everything of a Jewish character.

¹John iv, 23.

In 137 A. D. this returned Church in Capitolina elected as its chief pastor one Marcus, by race and training an uncircumcised Gentile. But creeds die hard. While Christianity as a whole had emancipated itself from the trammels of the synagogue, and the Jerusalem Church had so enlarged and liberalized itself as to be admitted to a community where no Jew was tolerated, still here and there the germs and bacteria of Judaism yet survived. There had evidently been a division among those who made up the company that migrated to Pella. We have seen that some returned to Hadrian's city, built on the site of ancient Jerusalem, but a handful remained behind. These dissidents were called "Ebionites," a name probably suggestive of poverty and not of a leader. They regarded Jesus as a man only, magnified asceticism, and held, as far as possible, to the Mosaic law. They were intensely Jewish in their antipathies, in their practices and expectations. Other centers of activity were similarly infected. Whereunto these living microbes of a dead faith may grow it is not for the writer of these pages to predict. That they contain the potencies and form of evils that may befall the Christian system can hardly be denied. Strange will it be if the Church shall again restore the authority of legalism, and shall come once more in bondage to ceremonialism and priestcraft. That it may be so is manifestly probable, these germs existing, and if subsequent history show these forebodings to have been fulfilled, the student of its thrilling pages need not be surprised.

At this point we part from the Jewish race. Throughout this volume the career of the elect people, the calling of Israel, the captivity, the deliverance, the mission, the failures, and the triumphs of the chosen nation, have been the most prominent of themes.

But now these children of Abraham sink into obscurity. They are no longer foremost. The scepter has passed from their hands. They are still in the world, but when compared with what they have been, henceforth they are as though they were not. We shall not meet them again in the course of this history. Their way and ours lie in different directions. But before we lose sight of them ought we not to recognize in some degree what they have been to the world, and what they have accomplished for its enlightenment and progress? It is hardly fair to overlook the grandeur of this race and the greatness of its works. If the sun did go down in blood, nevertheless it was a sun, and at its meridian clothed hill and vale with light. Let us turn from the sunset to the shining, from the gloomy scene of disaster and guilt to the brightness of holy achievements. What does mankind owe to the Jew — to the Jew under God, but nevertheless to the Jew?

To him the ages are indebted for a literature unsurpassed in the loftiness of its ideals, the purity of its ethics, and the depth and beauty of its spirituality. If other collections of writings may fairly rank with it on the score of intellectual brilliancy, still none can compare with it in moral and religious power. It stands by itself, unique, alone, supreme. To the Jew belongs the honor of having given a volume, which out of all the triumphs of devout genius has been selected as the Bible of humanity. The wisest men turn to its pages for instruction, the weakest for strength, the poorest for affluence, the saddest for comfort. Its heroes have thrilled the heart of the suffering and oppressed with courageous resolve to resist usurpation, and have reproduced themselves in Huguenot, Covenanter, and Puritan. Its psalms and prayers have voiced the religious feelings and aspirations of uncounted generations, and thus far the soul has found no sublimer speech in which to articulate its adoration and dependence. And its promises of a coming age of universal felicity, when children shall play in safety and not work in agony in the streets of the city, and when all men shall know the Lord, and be like the Lord, have gladdened, and cheered, and inspired the toiling masses patiently to endure and hopefully to wait. Such in part is the rich heritage the Jew has transmitted to posterity.

This, however, is not all. We learn from his own literature, and from the concurrent testimony of history, that to him may be traced the rise and establishment of monotheism, the union of morality with religion, the preservation and exaltation of the family, the origin of

kindly interest in the welfare of the slave and the stranger, and the beginning of that movement by which God came to be recognized as the Creator of the State, and not, as in pagan creeds, the State regarded as the creator of God. These conceptions embodied in doctrines and institutions, and wrought into practical forms in the struggle and development of national life, have been of value incalculable to the leading peoples of earth. They have led to a very general and generous recognition of human brotherhood, to a wide-spread and intelligent appreciation of the sanctity of home, to the growth of an immense number of philanthropies, and to an ever-deepening conviction that righteousness is the grandest foundation and the surest defense of the commonwealth. If religious feeling, domestic purity and felicity, neighborly kindness, national security, and sagacious government are of any value to the world, then, till the end of time, must mankind continue debtor to the Jew. And though "the beauty of Israel is slain upon the high places," and "the mighty are fallen," and though "on the mountains of Gilboa there be neither dew, nor rain, nor the offerings of fields," still, "O Jerusalem, if we forget thee, well may our right hand forget its cunning," and if we remember not what thou hast been to all kindreds and tribes, well may "our tongue cleave to the roof of our mouth"!

As we close the pages of a history that has filled the earth with its echoes, and render our tribute of gratitude to its poets and prophets, its saints and its sages, let us likewise be thankful that the calamities which overwhelmed the famous city did not deprive us of her contributions to human progress, and that they turned out in the end to be blessings to the world at large. For the first Jerusalem which, with all its glory yet "gendered to bondage," had to be effaced and obliterated that the second Jerusalem, the Church of Christ, "which is from above, and is free and the mother of us all," might be enlarged and become as well the true Temple both of God and humanity.

CHAPTER III.

THE APOSTLE OF LOVE.

"**B**EHOLD thy mother!" Such were the last words addressed by the dying Christ to his cousin and disciple, John. He had just contemplated with filial tenderness the maternal grief of Mary, and in this way drew attention to her defenseless position, and to her need of a protector. Before this, evidently, Joseph, her husband, had been gathered to his fathers. She was distressed and lonely. Some bond of union may have been broken between her and her other children. The nature of her son, James the Just, may have been too stern and cold to have responded adequately to her sorrows. Alas! that it should be so, that parents and their offspring should sometimes be farther apart in aims, tastes, and sympathies than those of different lineage and estate. But so it is. Often the most enduring friendships are found outside the family circle.

What causes operated to produce dissensions or alienations in the domestic relations of Mary's household cannot now be ascertained, but if the tradition is to be credited which dates the conversion of James to the period of the resurrection, the reason for apparent separation in feeling can easily be surmised. Up to the occurrence of that stupendous miracle, with all of his appreciation of his brother's blamelessness, he was not prepared to acknowledge him as the Messiah. He would naturally conclude that his mother's subscription to the assumptions of Jesus grew out of her partiality for her son. But, with all of a man's pride, he doubtless judged himself incapable of self-deception; and from this difference of view there might readily follow coolness and distrust. All this, however, is pure conjecture. We know nothing

of the real facts; we only suspect. One thing, and one thing only, is absolutely certain. It is that, for some good and sufficient reason, our Lord regarded John as the person best qualified and entitled to have charge of his widowed mother. This is certainly a noble tribute to the eminent worth of the "beloved disciple." The sacredness and dignity of the trust gives some idea of the Master's estimate of the man.

The narrative to which we have referred¹ states that John took her to his home. His home was in Jerusalem, and there he watched over her, and there she quietly fell asleep in her son Jesus, as Jesus, her son, in his infancy had often fallen asleep in her arms. Of her last days we have no reliable information. Providence has veiled in obscurity the closing scenes of her life, and merely the legend has descended to us that she died quietly and was buried near to Gethsemane. But, though we know so little of Mary's declining years, we are not left in doubt regarding the career of her protector, in whom we cannot fail to feel a high degree of interest on account of the exceptional confidence our Lord reposed in him.

He who was the youngest of the apostles, and who was destined to be the oldest and the last, was the son of Zebedee and Salome. His mother was sister to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and she was evidently devoted to her nephew, as after his death she was one who brought precious spices to the sepulcher. Zebedee, while belonging to the fisherman class from which our Lord chose several of his immediate followers, unlike others engaged in his hazardous calling, was not in impoverished circumstances. He owned his boats and nets, employed helpers, and his son was possessed of property in Jerusalem. It has been suggested that the residence of John in the capital was due to the business carried on by the family. In the city was the chief market for the goods the toilers of the sea had to sell, and probably John acted as the agent. This is not at all unlikely, and being assumed, it explains, in part at least, his prompt attention to the preaching of the Baptist. What more certain than that he would be among the first to learn of the excitement and enthusiasm caused by the appearance and doctrine of the Harbinger? The ministry of such a man would inevitably be the talk of the streets, and would appeal intensely to the religious portion of the community. Among the crowds that thronged the neighborhood of the Jordan it is, therefore, not surprising if the youthful John mingled and listened with teachable spirit to the thrilling message. Nor is the common view unworthy of credence that he became one of the earliest disciples who received baptism at the hands of the new Elijah. At least, we find him on the banks of the Jordan when Jesus came to "fulfill all righteousness." He heard the great prophet hail his cousin as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Hence it is only reasonable to suppose that he had already taken sides with those who professed to believe that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand." Not until later, however, was he called to the apostolic function. Doubtless he had been meditating on what he had seen and heard in the Jordanic region, and had pondered deeply every incident in the life of Jesus which he could recall, and had arrived at the conclusion that he must, indeed, be the promised Messiah. He was, therefore, prepared to answer intelligently the summons to leave fishing boat, and net, and all earthly interests that he might follow the Blessed One. There was no hesitancy in his manner when the call came to him, and his whole career was marked by a serene confidence in his cousin, interrupted only for a moment on that terrible night when the powers of darkness seemed to triumph. But though he was prompt to accept a scholarship in the apostolic college, and though from the first he was one of the more favored circle, he was not as prominently active as Peter and James were during the Savior's earthly ministry. It may have been the result of his youth, or the outcome of a sensitive and shrinking nature; but, whatever the explanation, he was evidently retiring, and not until after the martyrdom of Saint Paul and Saint James did he stand out in bold relief, the chief figure and the great leader of the Christian Church.

¹ John xix, 25-27.



THOMAS ALLOM.

EPHESUS.

Before the exodus of the disciples from Jerusalem to Pella, John had evidently departed from the country of his fathers. He could hardly have failed to discern the approaching calamities that were to obliterate Judaism; and being the last of the apostles he may have desired to give what remained to him of life where his authority and influence would accomplish the most for the future of Christianity. Paul was dead; James, the brother of John, had been murdered by Herod; James, his cousin, had been stoned to death or brutally mangled; Peter, likewise his old associate, was no more; a new generation had appeared, and controversial questions had arisen that demanded attention; and, with little surviving to attach him to his old home, the apostle, now past the meridian of life, withdrew to a community where the larger issues of the hour, on the decision of which depended in no small degree the religious development of coming years, might be met and intelligently settled. He removed to Ephesus, the metropolis of Asia, and his intimacy with that city continued till the close of his career.

But little now remains of all the pride and glory of that ancient mistress of the East, born, according to Justin, of the Amazons. A few ruins, near a Turkish village called Aiasaluck, encircled by imposing hills covered with luxuriant vegetation, and leading to a malaria-breeding marsh that was once a famous port for shipping, alone mark the spot where in John's time stood a magnificent emporium of trade, and a great center of human activity and ambition. Likewise has disappeared what was formerly the chief feature of the city—the Temple of Diana. This immense structure had taken over two centuries to rear, and marble, precious woods, and enormous masses of gold had been generously used in its elaborate ornamentation. Its bas reliefs were executed by Scopas, and its altar by Praxiteles. The worship of Diana, or Artemis (now spelt Anaitis), was introduced into the peninsula of Asia Minor by Cyrus. The goddess was the Asiatic representative of fruitfulness, and was regarded as the protectress of the municipality that honored her. It was claimed that her image had fallen from heaven. She was crowned with a mural coronet to represent her defense of cities; her body was covered with a breastplate on which were the signs of the zodiac, denoting her care of the seasons; over her girdle appeared a multitude of breasts, symbolizing her as the source of nourishment; and the other portions of her form were decorated with skins of various animals, to show that she watched over the interests of all creatures. The adoration wherewith she was honored was a degrading mixture of heathen rites and social dissipations. Drawn together by the commercial importance of Ephesus, even more than by its religious cult, Greeks and Asiatics, with no inconsiderable colony of Jews, had settled there and imparted to the community a cosmopolitan and bizarre-like character. Every shade of opinion and all kinds of subtle speculations and somber superstitions were represented by the strange, motley population. The morality of the people was extremely low, one of their own choice philosophers, Heraclitus by name, teaching that it was allowable for truth to employ falsehood in the interest of its own vindication. Some idea of the turbulent temper of the inhabitants is furnished by Paul's ministry to Ephesus, and the tumult provoked by the inroads of the Gospel. The letter addressed to the Ephesian Christians discloses to view some of the vices which imperiled the purity and consistency of those who had avowed themselves to be the Lord's. And John's messages to the Seven Churches of Asia throws considerable light on the actual state of Christianity in the important district of which Ephesus may be regarded as the influential center. Smyrna held fast to the doctrine of the cross, and believers there were divinely prospered. Pergamos, capital of a small province, was in the main faithful to the truth, but was troubled by some members who had gone over to the Nicolaitans, an ancient Antinomian sect. But, though disturbed by heresy, the Church had been honored by one faithful martyr, Antipas, who probably had fallen a witness to Nero's sanguinary madness. Thyatira had been led away from its steadfastness by the errors of some female, who is described as Jezebel, who claimed to be a prophetess and had encouraged lewdness and idolatry. Sardis, the chief city of the

ancient kingdom of Lydia, while preserving the outward forms of Christianity, was already gone over to unreality and sham, and was possessed only of a few names uncorrupted by the general defection. Philadelphia was in a much better condition, only she was not free from the Judaizing perverters; while poor Laodicea had yielded to the enervating influences of worldliness, and was neither cold nor hot. From the condition of these churches round about Ephesus we may form a proximately fair conception of the peculiarities, good and bad, of Christianity as John found it in that city when he first began to make it his abode.

Oriental thought, as well as oriental habits and Alexandrian speculations, had not only domesticated themselves in Ephesus, but had tainted the opinions and conduct of believers. "The ravening wolves," foreseen by Saint Paul, had entered into the sheepfold. Misguided, not to say wicked, men had prostituted the words of the Gospel, and had hidden heresy by clothing it with a Christian nomenclature—a trick not disdained by some modern teachers, who employ orthodox terminology when they are inculcating errors long since condemned. One name stands out conspicuously in John's time as representative of this pernicious tendency. It is that of Cerinthus. This man was a Jewish Christian, and if not a Gnostic himself, was one of the first to disseminate views that contained more, even, than the germ of Gnosticism. He believed in making a distinction between God and the Demiurgus, the latter being in his judgment the actual creator of all things. His sympathies were likewise with that Docetism which proclaimed a phantasmagorical gospel, teaching that Jesus was a mere man, on whom the "Christ" descended when he was baptized, and departed from him when he was nailed to the cross. This unwarranted conception may be regarded as the first step in the historical development of the mythical theory of evangelistic stories, which attained its final form in the work of Strauss, and which has been the source of no small amount of perplexity and alarm to the friends of truth. John evidently perceived the bearing of such speculations, and resolutely antagonized them. Tradition declares that he felt so keenly on the subject that he hastened away from the door of a public bath he was about to enter when he heard that Cerinthus was within, exclaiming: "Let us fly, that the thermæ fall not on our heads, since the enemy of truth is therein."

But it is not necessary to depict the apostle in these colors of superstition that his hostility to current heresies may be accentuated. The best evidence of his attitude toward the errors and errorists of his age is furnished by the Fourth Gospel, by the epistles which bear his name, and by the mystical Apocalypse, from which sources we may likewise gather an idea of the motives that governed him, of the mission he sought to fulfill, and of the method he employed. In the famous Muratorian fragment we have an account of the origin of the first of these documents. The elders and bishops are said to have approached Saint John, and to have urged him to present his testimony in writing. Their argument may have been substantially as set forth by Robert Browning in the words:

"There is left on earth
No one alive who knew (consider this),—
Saw with his eyes and handled with his hands
That which was from the first, the Word of Life;
How will it be when none more saith, 'I saw'?"

But, whatever the line of persuasion, the apostle consented. He and his companions fasted, and afterward when saturated with inspired truth he penned the sublime preface: "In the beginning was the Word." His other writings were called forth by various circumstances, all of them designed to counteract corruption in doctrine and deed, the Apocalypse being possibly the result of personal contact with the horrors of the Neronian persecution, and put into shape when he was made a companion in tribulation for the word of God "in the isle which is called Patmos."

The date of this exile has been the subject of heated controversy. Epiphanius places it in the time of Claudius, while Theophylact, and several modern writers of eminence, assign it to the reign of Nero. But Irenæus, Jerome, Sulpicius Severus, Orosius, and conservative critics of our own day, like Dean Alford, and historians like Professor Ramsay, believe that the banishment occurred in the days of Domitian, who ascended the throne 81 A. D. During the wise administration of Vespasian, and afterwards of his son, Titus, the churches had comparative rest from oppressive surveillance; but when Domitian grasped the reins of power persecution broke forth again. He was the first of the emperors to sentence Christians to exile; and if we are to interpret John's own account of his being in Patmos, as it seems to read, it strengthens the inference that it was under his sway that the apostle was condemned to the solitude of the island in the Ægean Sea. After comparing notes with leading scholars, and weighing all the available evidence for and against, I can no more believe that John wrote the Apocalypse in the reign of Nero than I can credit the suggestion of some critics that it was penned by an Ephesian Presbyter named John, who, from all I can gather, is a fictitious personage invented for a purpose. No; it was prepared subsequent to the accession of the brutal and craven-spirited Domitian, whose career was rendered peculiarly infamous by the dominancy of his wife, Domitia, who has been described as his evil genius personified. The spot to which Saint John was banished, and where this sacred book was written is known as one of the Sporades, and is a rugged mass of rock some eighteen miles in circumference, with savage promontories, and totally inadequate to support a large population. It served only as a stopping place for vessels, and is rarely alluded to in ancient literature. Pliny and Strabo refer to it; but it was altogether too sterile and too uninteresting to attract serious attention. Its obscurity suddenly ended when the wonderful visions of Saint John came to be read by the churches. Then the desolate retreat in that part of the Ægean which is called the Icarian Sea was converted into another Sinai, another Hermon, and another Mount of Olives as it shall be when the feet of the returning Lord shall stand there, and since then, and down through all the succeeding centuries, when meditating on the achievements of Christ's followers, devout souls have loved to recall

"The precepts sage they wrote to many a land,
How he, who lone in Patmos banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced by heaven's command."

The sketch we have given of the salient features of John's career, and the suggestion we have ventured to make regarding his relation to the future of Christianity, prepare us for the more important study of his character and mission. These two are more closely allied than is commonly realized. Men generally *do* simply what they *are*. And when "what they are" can be determined, with almost scientific accuracy it can be decided "what they will do," not in details, but in the main course of their action. God's servants are chosen to special service, and the nature of the service can in some measure be understood from the enduements and qualifications of the servants. Therefore, intimacy with the last of the apostles will prove a useful, if not a necessary, preliminary to an adequate conception of his particular ministry. Perhaps in no better way can this intimacy be commenced than by a passage from the writings of the eloquent Chrysostom, descriptive of the great evangelist:

"The Son of Thunder, the loved of Christ, the pillar of the churches, who leaned on Jesus' bosom, makes his entrance. He plays no drama, he covers his head with no mask. Yet he wears array of inimitable beauty. For he comes having his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and his loins girt, not with fleece dyed in purple, or bedropped with gold, but woven through and through with, and composed of, the truth itself. He will now appear before us, not dramatically, for with him there is no theatrical effect or fiction, but with his



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DOMITIANUS.

head bared he tells the bare truth. All these things he will speak with absolute accuracy, being the friend of the King himself; aye, having the King speaking within him, and hearing all things from him which he heareth from the Father; as he saith, 'You have I called friends, for all things that I have heard from my Father, I have made known unto you.' Wherefore, as if we all at once saw one stooping down from yonder heaven, and promising to tell us truly of things there, we should all flock to listen to him, so let us now dispose ourselves. For it is from up there that this man speaks down to us. And the fisherman is not carried away by the whirling current of his own exuberant verbosity; but all that he utters is with the steadfast accuracy of truth, and as if he stood upon a rock he budes not. All time is his witness. Seest thou the boldness, and the great authority of his words! How he utters nothing by way of doubtful conjecture, but all demonstratively, as if passing sentence! Very lofty is this apostle, and full of dogmas, and he lingers over them more than over other things."¹

In this picture there is no trace of effeminaey and weakness such as Raphael has imparted to the face of the apostle. It is the portrait of a man eminently sincere, and scrupulously honest. He was no sentimentalist, no vapid dreamer, to whom truth and error were of equal value, and to whom liberalism was the only grace worth cultivating. Evidently he was too genuine himself to be charmed by the ideals of perfection that have been eulogized by shallow souls, in which amiable weakness is identified with love and superabundant emotionalism with saintliness. John was made of nobler stuff; and from various lights thrown on his character in the Scriptures we find in him a tenderness not incompatible with sternness, and a sympathy not inconsistent with uncompromising devotion to justice. Undoubtedly he was impressible and sensitive, endued with something of the poet's genius; but endued as well with something like the poet's irascibility and intolerance.

A steady intellectual and spiritual growth is observable in this man from the beginning to the end of his career. When chosen by Christ to the apostolate he was unlettered and untrained. But, though not cultured, he was eminently susceptible to culture. His nature was plastic and receptive, and yet of a firm and sinewy texture, like some species of wood, pliable to the knife of the carver, and not splintering at each stroke after the manner of the highly perfumed, but porous sandalwood. The Lord did not call inferior minds to the responsibilities of leadership in his kingdom. While his immediate followers were not educated, they were capable of being educated, and were not of those unfortunates who are "ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth." In the Master's company John made remarkable progress. Every now and then he betrayed his ignorance of the new spirit that had come into the world, revealed his own narrowness of horizon, was guilty of forwardness and intemperateness, and yet in all of his mistakes disclosed the enthusiasm of the scholar anxious to comprehend the divine science he was being taught. When ambition stirred him, and the Savior rebuked the apostles for their unseemly strife as to who amongst them should be greatest, he saw the sweet significance of the lesson imparted, of which the little child served as text and theme.² On another occasion he came to Jesus saying: "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us."³ Undoubtedly we have here zeal for the dignity of his Lord, mixed probably with some degree of sectarian exclusiveness. His speech recalls the bigotry, not confined, unhappily, to any one school of faith, which challenges the right of men and women to do good unless duly authorized in a prescribed way and by certain officials. This spirit was condemned by the great Teacher, even as he reproached John and his brother James for their desire to bring down consuming fire on the peasants of En Gannim for their churlish inhospitality.⁴ They pleaded the example of Elijah for what they proposed, and it has been quaintly said that it was not surprising for these "Sons of Thunder" to try to "flash lightning." But not in this way was the new

¹ Chrysostom, in "Johann," Homily III, Tom. VIII.

² Luke ix, 46-48.

³ Mark ix, 33-40.

⁴ Luke ix, 54-56.

empire to extend its boundaries. "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save." Not by violence, not by coercion, not even by terror are the children of sin to be won from darkness and despair. Jesus is slowly revealing the only true method to his servants in these events before he names it, is working out the definition of a word before he communicates it. Nor does the explication approach completeness until he answers Salome, the mother of James and John, who desires for her sons that they be exalted respectively to the right and left of his kingly throne. Again, the solemn "Ye know not." How little we realize our limitations. "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Impetuously the brothers answer: "We are able."¹ By and by they came to understand more fully that Jesus was here referring to his sufferings, and ultimately they both realized that only by voluntary self-surrender and self-sacrifice is it possible to save humanity.

To this new spirit in history, the spirit "that suffers long and is kind," that "endureth all things and hopeth all things," the Christ and his followers gave the name "love." The term was not new, but the fullness of meaning was. What it signifies in the Christian economy had to be acted out before it could be defined. And as Saint John saw and shared in the practical unfolding of what it comprehends, he came to be conformed to its image. He assimilated its life, breathed its breath, and his entire character took on its majesty and grace. His writings glow with the light of love, not with the idle sentimentality that encourages evil by condoning it, but with that noble devotion described in one of his epistles: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."² So completely was he subjugated by what he believed to be the very essence of the Almighty, that he found therein his own special calling, and the scope of his calling as the last of the apostles.

The great leaders of the primitive Church, including Saint Paul, while having much in common, were not monotonous counterparts of each other. Their personalities were not alike, and they did not accentuate the same phase or aspect of the Christian life. It is not fair to say that they antagonized; they rather supplemented and completed one another. They all possessed in some degree what each possessed, but no one in the same degree. James was eminently authoritative; Peter, aggressive; Paul, argumentative; while John was always affectionate. Tradition influenced James, impulse governed Peter, logic impelled Paul; but John was dominated by love. Duty seemed always to be uppermost in the mind of James; faith appeared to be foremost in the thought of Paul; zeal evidently with Saint Peter was an ideal; but with John love was everything. It is not to be inferred that this grace of love was indifferent to the other apostles, for they all rendered homage to its beauty, and nowhere in literature is there a more glowing tribute to its worth than is found in Saint Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. But in their writings, on the whole, other themes occupy a much larger place than this. With Saint John, however, it was different. He regarded love as supremely authoritative. To him it was the final argument, and the mightiest impulse to service. It was to him only another word for duty, even for zeal and faith. Love to him was the fulfillment of the law, the motive to enthusiastic endeavor, and the very spring of faith. All of his theology was condensed to the shorelessness and fathomlessness of this tiny word, and was articulated in the sublime summary:

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we

¹ Matthew xx, 22.² I. John iii, 16.

ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.”¹

“He that shuts love out in turn shall be
Shut out from love, and on his threshold lie
Howling in utter darkness. Not for this
Was common clay made from the common earth,
Molded by God, and tempered with the tears
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.”²

In view, therefore, of Saint John's character and his teachings we are warranted in concluding that to him was reserved the sublime and sacred task of disclosing the place of love in the Christian system. To him was given the privilege of showing the place of love in theology, in ethics, and in all the aims and aspirations of the Church. Not only did he teach that it comprehends the true doctrine of God, but he also attributed to it the origin of the atonement, and represented it as the very essence of the soul's regenerated life, and as the organizing principle of the Christian society. Others had, of course, approached this subject before him. Various and beautiful are the intimations and declarations touching love in the Bible, and particularly in apostolic literature. But it seems to have been left for the inspired genius of Saint John to combine all previous estimates of love, to supplement them with even a clear discernment of its nature and value, and to exalt it to its true throne in the economy of the universe and redemption.

All this appears very distinctly in his Gospel and other writings; not, however, merely in their more stately conceptions, but in their gentle and tender pictures of human joys and trials. It is our apostle who describes the wedding in Cana of Galilee, who reveals Jesus in familiar converse with the Samaritan woman, who pictures him in the domestic circle of Martha and Mary, sympathizing with them in sorrow, and who, if the text of the story may be credited, portrays him compassionately dealing with the outcast taken in her sin. There is just a touch of love in every scene he paints, and he makes the impression on all who thoughtfully follow his narrative that he brings religion into intimate relation to the commonplace experiences of mankind. From his treatment of the theme we gain a wonderfully high idea of the grandeur of religion, and, beholding it in contact with the daily affairs of men and women, we are compelled to form even a loftier idea of humanity itself. No one will doubt that the age in which Saint John toiled and taught needed this very lesson. But it was not then fully comprehended, neither was it duly appreciated. The theology of love was centuries in advance of the times of the Cæsars. Weary, laborious, troublous years had to pass before the Church should be educated up to its level. She is not quite up to it yet. The Fourth Gospel anticipated these later days, and foreshadowed the blessed period, apparently soon about to dawn, when the religion of love should transform society, sanctify its ordinary joys and sweeten its every duty. It was the latest evangel that imparted to Christianity this unique and precious distinction—“the religion of love”—the full significance of which we are only now beginning to grasp. The nineteenth century is just waking up to understand the first. It has made a discovery. The Christianity long hidden in far-away seas of speculation, and veiled in mists of ancient tradition, has once more been brought to light. A grander work has been accomplished of late than was wrought by Columbus 400 years ago. He disclosed a continent to the wondering eyes of his contemporaries, but this generation has rediscovered a religion whose spirit is necessary to the peace and joy of every continent beneath the watchful stars. Hence all around us are voices sounding sweet with the praises of love.

Now, we hear Monsell saying: “Love is of God; it is a divine gift; do not seek to crush

¹ I. John iv, 7-12.

² Alfred Tennyson.

it; seek to keep it steadfast; and seek to help others by love, and letting their love of you draw them upward and closer to God, the Fount of all love."

So likewise the words of Kingsley ring in our soul: "How Christ's death takes away thy sins thou wilt never know on earth — perhaps not in heaven. But why he died thou canst see at the first glance. He died because he was Love, Love itself, Love boundless, unchangeable; Love which inhabits eternity, and, therefore, could not be burdened or foiled by any sin or rebellion of man, but must love man still."

On this same theme F. W. Robertson also delights to dwell, at one time exclaiming: "Love is universal. It is interested in all that is human, not merely in the concerns of its own family, nation, sect, or circle of association. Humanity is the sphere of its operation." Christina Rossetti finds in it a plea for acceptance at a throne of grace:

"O thou who seest what I cannot see,
Thou who didst love us all so long ago,
O thou who knowest what I must not know,
Remember all my hope, remember me."

Henry Ward Beecher perceives in this hallowed grace a fullness impossible of complete realization in time: "Love in this world is like a seed taken from the tropics and planted where the winter comes too soon; and it cannot spread itself in flower clusters and wide-twining vines, so that the whole air is full of the perfume thereof. But there is to be another summer for it yet. Care for the root now, and God will care for the top by and by." And in harmony with this expectation Wordsworth sings:

"Life is energy of love,
Divine or human; exercised in pain,
In strife, in tribulation; and ordained,
If so approved and sanctified, to pass
Through shades and silent rest to endless joy."

Thus on every side is love magnified, and signs are multiplying, not only in word, but in deed as well, that the Synoptic period of Christianity is fast passing away, and the Johannean era, which thresholds the millennium, is hastening apace to fill the earth with its sacred and immortal triumphs. And in this progress we read the proof that the last of the apostles was indeed consecrated by the Master to the vocation we have attributed to him in this chapter, and concerning which Frederick Maurice wrote convincingly in these terms: "Christ chose the apostles from no partial affection, but as witnesses of his truth and love to all mankind, and the one who was nearest to him and received most of his love into his heart, was the one whom he called to show forth most fully the love with which he loved the universe in giving himself for it!"

Tradition is rich with memorials of Saint John's closing years on earth. He lived to an advanced age, and passed to his reward as the first century was being supplanted by the second. From Patmos he returned to the Ionian capital, where most of his literary work was performed, and among tender and watchful friends quietly and gently, as became the apostle of love, he "fell asleep." His tomb at Ephesus long remained a sacred spot to the pious pilgrims, who spread reports of marvels wrought by the dust it treasured, forgetting, perhaps, the far more striking and authentic wonders accomplished by his living word.

The stories related of his declining years are all more or less suggestive of his character and mission. In perfect harmony with what he was and what he taught is the scene between him and the bishop regarding the young man who had departed from Christian fellowship to join a company of brigands. It seems that the apostle had specially commended him to the pastor's care, and returning to inquire for the youth, and, hearing of his lapse from rectitude, he addressed the negligent shepherd in this manner: "Come, bishop, return me the deposit

committed to thee by myself and Christ, in the presence of the Church over which thou presidest. I demand the young man, the soul of a brother." When he was informed of the boy's dangerous and iniquitous course, he followed him to the mountains, penetrated in person the robber's camp, and brought back the wandering disciple. It is said that when he found him his plea was resistless, for he thus remonstrated: "Why dost thou fly, my son, from thine unarmed father? Have compassion on me; fear not. There is still hope for thee. I will pray to Christ for thee. Should it be necessary, I will suffer death for thee, as Christ did for us. I will give my life for thine." No wonder the boy was moved to contrition by this impassioned eloquence of love.

Less heroic, but none the less tender and characteristic, is the legend that tells how, when unable to preach, and when he could scarcely hold forth his arms, he would repeat to all who gathered round him: "Little children, love one another." When one of the disciples at length asked: "Master, why dost thou always say the same things?" he answered: "Because it is a divine command; and if it be obeyed, it is enough;" or as another version gives it, "Because God is love."

Some persons in the early Church, at a time when asceticism was looked on as almost identical with sanctity, circulated stories of Saint John's mortifications and fastings which were hardly in keeping with some of his teachings. But, on the other side, we have an anecdote of an interview with a huntsman, which brings out the genial temper of God's aged servant. The hunter desired to see this venerable apostle, and to converse with him; but to his surprise and horror he found him amusing himself with a tame bird. Observing the expression of his visitor's face, the old man inquired: "What is that thing which thou carriest in thy hand?" "A bow," replied the sportsman. "Why, then, is it unstrung?" "Because," answered the youth, "were I to keep it always strung it would lose its elasticity and become useless." "Even so, be not affronted at this my brief relaxation, which prevents my spirit from waxing faint." Love understands the limitations of our strength, and is the first to prescribe such recreations as can bring repose and rejuvenescence. The mind little given to religious thought, and occupied almost entirely with worldly vanities, may affect to be shocked at the occasional and innocent amusements of Christians; but love—love the most ardent and divine—perceives the weakness of the flesh, and rejoices in the harmless diversions by which it is met and overcome.

A curious statement was made by Polycrates, who was bishop of Ephesus near the close of the second century, regarding the assumption of Saint John of the *petalon*, or plate borne by the Jewish high priest on his forehead. The same thing, however, is affirmed by Epiphanius of Saint James the Just. It is hardly credible that both of these noble men adorned themselves in this curious manner, and there is absolutely nothing in the character of Saint John to warrant the supposition that he would betray such a weakness for Judaism in a Gentile community. The legend must be discarded. It bears on its face the marks of an endeavor to obscure the simplicity of Christianity, which was only too successful at a later stage of its history. But while the story is untrustworthy, it at least shows the impression made by Saint John on his times. The inscription on the priestly mitre, "Holiness unto the Lord," his contemporaries realized was truly symbolic of his character and consecration. They may even have associated this inscription with him because of his lofty intelligence, worn as it had been by the priest on his brow to denote that God was to be honored with the head as well as with the heart, and as a sign that true holiness proceeds from enlightenment, and not from excited feeling. Thus understood, the story is only an additional tribute to love. For love is the key to all that the apostle was, and to all that he did. Love quickened and enlarged his mind, purified his nature, and conformed him to the image of Christ, and wrote, in fact, on his entire personality, if not in golden letters on his forehead, "Holiness unto the Lord."

And thus from his life we learn the transforming power of this divine grace. It can yet "do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." In it centers the hope of the world. It is the great painter, rendering each inch of common canvas gorgeous in imagery worth the ransom of a king. It is the great sculptor, breathing on stone and converting it into living form of beauty. It is the real miracle-worker, by whose potency water becomes wine, stones become bread, and things most worthless are transmuted into gold, and objects most hideous into shapes of imperishable loveliness.

"Love can make us like Saint Peter,
Love can make us like Saint Paul,
Love can make us like the blessed
 Bosom Friend of all,
Great Saint John, though we are small.
Love which clings, and trusts, and worships,
Love which rises from a fall,
Love which teaches glad obedience,
 Labors most of all,
Love makes great the great and small."¹

CHAPTER IV.

THE ADVANCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

SULPICIUS SEVERUS, a fourth century writer, quoting from the "Histories" by Tacitus — books now unhappily lost — gives an account of a council of war held during the siege of Jerusalem. In the debate it was urged that the Temple should be destroyed; for by that act the religion of the Jews and Christians would be effectually extirpated. From this report it is evident that officials of the empire did not discriminate between the faith of Moses and that of Christ. Neumann thinks that this confusion continued to the reign of Domitian, 81 A. D. Up to that time he holds that the Roman government considered the Christians to be merely a sect of the Jews. Hence, it compelled them to pay the poll-tax levied on the Hebrew people; and he contends that the collection of the tax discovered to the authorities, not only their numbers, but the fact that they were entirely independent of other cults, and were organized into associations of their own, called churches.

Mommsen credits the story regarding the council of war, and insists that "the Jewish insurrection had too clearly brought to light the dangers involved in this formation of a national religious union on the one hand rigidly concentrated, on the other spreading over the whole East, and having ramifications even in the West."² According to this great authority, Titus and his generals looked on Christianity as an extension of Judaism, as a missionary phase of the old system, which, if permitted to spread further and to organize itself into leagues, might result in general political disturbances similar to the revolt they were seeking to suppress at Jerusalem. It was not, then, unnatural for these soldiers to suppose that if the seat and source of this treasonable and anarchical creed were obliterated, all of its dependents and offshoots would in a little while become extinct. On this theory some among them advocated the demolition of the Temple; and one of this way of thinking may have been back of the hand that cast the blazing brand into the sacred house. The apprehension entertained by these Romans substantiates at least this much, that the spiritual movement inseparably allied with the

¹ Christina Rossetti.

² Ramsay, "Church in the Roman Empire," chap. xii.

name of Christ, whatever its specific character, had already made itself felt in many localities, and was advancing throughout the empire with rapid strides.

And its purpose to continue its march was accentuated by a word that came into vogue early in the second century. I refer to the word "Catholic," which first occurs in an epistle addressed by Ignatius to believers in Smyrna, 112 A. D.—"Wheresoever Jesus Christ is, there is the universal Church." This language apparently suggests something more than mere extension. It carries with it the primary idea of a unique distinction; the perpetual presence of the blessed Savior. Universality lies principally in adaptation to the diversified needs of humanity, and to the needs of diversified humanity. It is rather spiritual than physical; moral and devotional, rather than geographical. But in the course of a few years the secondary meaning of the term came to overshadow, in some degree, its original signification. Thus the Church at Smyrna, in the narrative of Polycarp's martyrdom (156 A. D.) directed to the Philomelium brethren, writes of "the holy and universal Church sojourning in every place"—laying stress on the territory covered. This tendency becomes more pronounced in the teachings of Augustine. Hence the protest of Donatus and his followers in opposition to the ecclesiastical drift of his times: "Your Catholic Church is a geographical expression; it means the union of so many societies in so many provinces, or in so many nations; our Catholic Church is the union of all those who are Christians in deed as well as in word: it depends not upon intercommunion, but upon the observance of all the divine commands and sacraments."

But, in guarding against this partial interpretation, we in our day must not be blind to the great fact that from the commencement our Lord and his apostles contemplated the subjugation of mankind to the faith of the cross. This is evident from the language of the great commission, and from its interpretation as recorded in "The Acts." While the universal Church is that body which comprehends the entire or universal truth, it is likewise that body which seeks to impart the universal truth to universal humanity. This sublime duty is the necessary corollary to her sublime character. So she understood it, and from the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost she sent forth her missionary evangelists to preach the Gospel; and this, the earliest advance of Christianity, forms one of the most notable chapters in the history of mankind.

The new religion unquestionably spread with wonderful rapidity, especially during the closing part of the first century. In Asia Minor it speedily acquired immeasurable influence. Phrygia and the vast plains of Axylum soon acknowledged its power. "It existed among a placid peasantry on the gray slopes of the Batanean hills, in villages which were always scattered, and which, as the great highways of Roman commerce, gradually decayed into silent death. It existed in the thriving municipalities of Gaul, where rhetoric and philosophy flourished, where the civil law was studied and practiced by skilled jurists, and where the elaborate framework of the municipal institutions of the empire was strong enough to withstand the tempest of Teutonic invasion. It existed in the rude septs of Ireland, where Roman organization was practically unknown. It existed also in the busy commercial centers of Africa, where the competition of life was keen and the sense of individuality strong."¹ The letters of Pliny to Trajan show that before 112 A. D. it had swept over his province so victoriously that the pagan ritual had been interrupted, and the temples in no small degree forsaken. Business in one department had been seriously depressed by the new ideas. The sale of fodder for the animals necessary for sacrifices on heathen altars had materially declined; and such a loss was of itself sufficient to stir up a Roman proconsul's zeal in behalf of his unbelievable gods. He declared that people of every age, every rank, and also of both sexes, had in his province of Bithynia caught the contagion of this novel superstition. The number of converts was so vast that he could not proceed to exterminate the deluded creatures by slaughter.

¹ Hatch, "Organization of Early Christian Churches," p. 12.

The "excellent Pliny," therefore, seeks instruction from the most "noble Trajan." They are both polite toward each other in their correspondence, and plan measures of repression, which, after causing alarm and suffering, fail in accomplishing their object. Ignatius testifies, while these officials are letter-writing, that Christianity is "believed in every tongue."

Scarcely forty years after this Justin Martyr states that "there is not one single race of men, whether barbarians or Greeks, or whatever they may be called, nomads, or vagrants, or herdsmen living in tents, among whom prayers and giving of thanks are not offered through the Name of the crucified Jesus." So likewise Irenæus (185 A. D.) refers to the Church as "dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth"; and declares that the path of those who are of the Church circumscribes the whole world." Tertullian is even more enthusiastic. He inquires of Scapula: "What will you do with so many thousands of human beings, such multitudes of men and women, of every sex, and every age, and every rank, when they give themselves up to you?" In another place he exclaims: "Behold whole nations emerging from the whirlpool of human error to God, the Creator, to God the Christ — Christ, who has now taken the whole world with the faith of his Gospel." Then we have the famous passage, often quoted: "We are a people of yesterday, and we have filled everything of yours — cities, islands, fortresses, towns, councils, your very camps, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum. We have left you nothing but your temples. We can count your armies, and our numbers in a single province will be greater." This apologist does not hesitate to draw attention to the services rendered by Christian soldiers when the emperor, Marcus Aurelius, was at war with the Marcomanni (174 A. D.), and acknowledged by Aurelius in a letter to the senate. When imprisoned in a defile and suffering for water, Christians in the army prayed for deliverance, and according to the story a thunderstorm broke over them, under cover of which the Marcomanni were successfully assailed. These men were afterward named the "Thundering Legion." But it is not likely that attention would have been called to them had they been few and unimportant. If, however, as Mommsen remarks, "the camp and the court were always centers of Christianizing influences," then the legend becomes another witness to the vast multiplication of converts before the close of the second century. And we are not, therefore, surprised to hear Origen (250 A. D.) triumphantly inform Celsus: "In all Greece, and in all barbarous races within our world, there are tens of thousands who have left their national laws and customary gods for the law of Moses and the Word of Jesus Christ; though to adhere to that law is to incur the hatred of idolaters, and to have embraced that Word is to incur the risk of death as well. And considering how, in a few years and with no great store of teachers, in spite of the attacks which have cost us life and property, the preaching of that Word has found its way into every part of the world, so that Greeks and barbarians, wise and unwise, adhere to the religion of Jesus — doubtless it is a work greater than any work of man."

These accounts are probably more or less rhetorical. As accurate statistics were not possible, the writers may have been carried away to some extent by their devout imaginations and the exigencies of controversy. But Dr. Philip Schaff thinks, after making all necessary allowances, that there must have been half a million of believers in the empire on the close of the first century, and twelve millions, a tenth of the whole population, at the beginning of the fourth. This he admits is not the highest estimate given.¹ I am inclined to believe it too conservative. The millions of graves in the Catacombs at Rome, only one of the great burying places of the early Christians, and sheltering the dead of only about 200 years, taken in connection with the confident assurances of the writers I have quoted, call for a much larger figure than Dr. Schaff is disposed to allow. But whether twelve millions or more, unquestionably Origen is warranted in regarding this extraordinary increase as "a work greater than any work of man."²

¹ "Christian Church," Vol. I, p. 197.

² Lorimer, "Argument for Christianity."

In following this advance of Christianity it ought not to be overlooked that Pliny and other witnesses concede that "every rank" — the highest, therefore, as well as the lowest — had submitted, in these early days, to the authority of Jesus. It is a mistake to suppose that only the illiterate, the depraved, the impoverished and enslaved, welcomed the Gospel of salvation in these crucial times. This is an error that ought to be corrected. Paul's statement concerning "the called" may be carried just a trifle too far. Even he does not say, "not *any* wise men after the flesh, not *any* mighty, not *any* noble," but only "not *many*,"¹ which is altogether a very different and a less radical statement.

Ramsay writes: "This point is one of peculiar importance in studying the effect produced by the Christian religion on the Roman world." And he adds: "It spread at first among the educated more rapidly than among the uneducated; nowhere had it a stronger hold (as Mommsen observes) than in the household and at the court of the emperors. Where Roman organization and Greek thought have gone, there Paul, by preference, goes."² Even the Apostle of the Gentiles does not tarry at the centers of illiteracy, but appeals to the cultivated classes of Athens, and to the intelligent congregations gathered in the synagogues. His missionary journeys prove that he was not indifferent to the success of the Gospel among the more refined and influential circles of society. On reading the closing chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, the impression is received that he and his companions are sending greetings to individuals of prominence, if not of distinction. Erastus, the treasurer of Corinth, a man unquestionably of some social as well as of official importance, joins him in his loving salutations. And the mention of the city where he dwelt reminds us that Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue there, another dignitary, had embraced the Gospel. It is probable, likewise, that Lucius, Jason, Sosipater, as well as Timotheus, belonged to leading families in the community where they were born, or where they then resided. The apostle, when addressing the Philippians, forwards affectionate greetings from the saints in Rome, especially, or "chiefly" from those of "Caesar's household." This expression, "*Domus Caesaris*," covers every variety of personage employed in the emperor's immediate service, whether high or low, weak or powerful.

It is well known that some individuals of servile station in the families of the great were educated and influential. That the believers mentioned by Paul in his Epistle to the Romans were of more than ordinary rank is made evident from the occurrence of their names on places of burial devoted to imperial freedmen and slaves on the Appian Way. The merit of this discovery is due to Bishop Lightfoot, who investigated these tributes to the dead, and made out the following names: Amplias, Urbanus, Stachys, Apelles, Tryphæna, Tryphosa, Rufus, Hermes, Hermas, Philologus, Julius, etc.³ Should it be contended that these persons may have occupied very lowly positions, still it is significant that so many under the very shadow of the throne should have yielded to the sovereignty of Christ. Even if they were only slaves, who can compute their influence on their masters and mistresses?

About the year 57 A. D. Pomponia Græcina, wife of that Aulus Plautius who was called "Conqueror of Britain," was accused of sympathy with the "foreign superstition." That she was a Christian woman is inferred, not merely from the vague language of Tacitus,⁴ but from a monument to a certain Pomponius Græcinus in the ancient crypt of Lucina near the Catacomb of Callistus, showing that this noble family at an early date had accepted the Gospel. Was she converted through the faithful teaching and example of some enlightened servant? A question this, not to be answered on this side of the judgment day, but one of those inquiries, nevertheless, that open wide fields for reflection. To me it is not probable that any other kind of domestic but one of marked intelligence and of high standing could have ever interested a lady of such exalted rank as Pomponia in the religion of our Lord.

¹ I. Corinthians i, 26.

² "Church in the Roman Empire," p. 57.

³ Compare Romans xvi.

⁴ "Annals," xiii, 32.

Another and a more striking illustration of the progress of Christianity during the first century among the exclusive and the noble of the land, is presented in the sad but triumphant history of Flavius Clemens and his wife, Flavia Domitilla. They were both cousins to the reigning emperor, Domitian. Flavius had been consul, and his children were in the line of probable succession to the throne. But when the persecution which exiled Saint John to Patmos raged in the empire, he and his wife were condemned on a charge of atheism or sacrilege. He was put to death. She was banished. Acilius Glabrio, another consul, was among the sufferers of this trying period; and many others, almost as prominent, fell victims to the fury of pagan hostility and intolerance. Eusebius refers to Domitilla as a Christian, and her memory preserved on a monument on the Ardeatine Way, confirms his statement.

Thus, the *superstitio nova ac malefica* had infested an entire branch of the Flavian family; and after this we are not surprised to hear of senators being degraded from their exalted rank on account of their loyalty to Christ. Rodolfo Lanciani, from personal investigation of Roman antiquities, has furnished new and interesting proof of this movement of the Gospel among the leaders of society. He says: "I may also cite the names of several Cornelii, Cæcili, and Æmilii, the flower of Roman nobility, grouped near the graves of Saint Cæcilia and Pope Cornelius, of Liberalis, a *consul suffectus*, and a martyr, whose remains were buried in the Via Salaria; of Jallia Clementina, a relative of Jallius Bassus, consul before A. D. 161; of Catia Clementina, daughter or relative of Catus, consul 230 A. D., not to speak of personages of equestrian rank, whose names have been collected by hundreds." He quotes also Lampridius, who, when describing the religious sentiments of the emperor, Alexander Severus (222-235 A. D.), writes in the following terms: "He was determined to raise a temple to Christ, and enlisted him among the gods; a project attributed also to Hadrian. There is no doubt that Hadrian ordered temples to be erected in every city to an unknown god, and because they have no statue we still call them temples of Hadrian. He is said to have prepared them for Christ; but to have been deterred from carrying his plan into execution by the consideration that the temples of the old gods would become deserted, and the whole population turn Christian—*omnes christianos futuros*."¹ It is known that Julia Mamaea, the mother of Severus, was well affected toward the Christians; and these instances of imperial favor seem to have been prophetic of the inevitable triumph of the cross.

But in addition to these evidences, the high level of thought and of literary excellence maintained in the "Apologies" of the second century fully corroborates the position that Christianity had succeeded in penetrating some of the foremost patrician families. The writings of Quadratus, Aristides, Justin Martyr, Minucius Felix, Claudius Apollinaris, Athenagoras, and Theophilus of Antioch, forbid the supposition that only ignorant and obscure people composed the membership of Christian churches. While undoubtedly the large majority were poor and of modest stations in life, still not a few among them compared in wealth and social standing with Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea of Gospel fame. Some of them, indeed, were so near the throne that Ignatius (112 A. D.) feared lest they should use their influence to procure for him imperial protection and thus rob him of the martyr's crown. Thus, then, while it held good in these formative days, that "not many rich, not many noble were called"—not many in comparison with the total number of the Lord's followers—nevertheless, the roll of these prosperous, titled, and educated converts was sufficiently long to relieve Christianity from the suspicion of class prejudice, and evermore to enhance the difficulty of accounting for its success apart from the direct interposition of the Almighty.

But expansion, as well as extension, is a prominent feature of the advance we are studying. It is encouraging to learn from Dionysius of Alexandria that "the house of the emperor Valerian (257 A. D.) was full of worshipers, and was a very Church of God"; but, then, we

¹ "Pagan and Christian Rome," pp. 10-13.

are equally interested to know whether Christianity itself had evinced any signs of self-development and progress. Did it, in the course of 300 years unfold graces, qualities, powers, not distinctly observable at the first, as well as unfold races and classes not originally embraced in its fellowship? Did it grow as well as spread? Evidently the Christian army overran the enemy's country; but did it increase in discipline, efficiency, and soldierly virtues in proportion to the territory it conquered? Was its onward movement matched by an inward and upward movement? Was it, in some degree, pliable and elastic, or was it hard and unyielding? Did it become greater, as well as larger? These questions, differing in phraseology, cover in reality the same line of inquiry. Were there internal and structural changes in the Christian organization, modifications possibly of its essential and native elements, just as all changes in the human organism from infancy to manhood are only variations in the action of its necessary properties and forces, keeping pace with its enlargement? The answer of history is in the affirmative. History, that deals not with theories, preferences, or hypotheses concerning what ought to have been, or must have been, but records only what has been, is very positive in the testimony it bears to the progressiveness as well as the aggressiveness of primitive Christianity. The marks of this form of advance are not lacking in the annals of apostolic activity preserved in the New Testament, though Weizsäcker¹ is, perhaps, a trifle extravagant in alleging that they are found in the fact that our Lord's followers were at the first merely called "disciples," then "Christians," afterward "brethren," and finally "saints." But the various phases of the period covered by the sacred narrative have already been sufficiently delineated, and it only remains to trace the outworking of what appears to have been begun when Paul determined "to turn unto the Gentiles."

After passing the meridian of the first century, the Christian community gradually withdrew from even seeming affiliation with the Jewish synagogue. The synagogue "was the local center of the religious and social life of the Jews, as the Temple at Jerusalem was the center of their national life. It was a school as well as a church, and the nursery and guardian of all that is peculiar in this peculiar people."² The name was applied, not exclusively to a building, but to an institution as well. And in both meanings of the term the synagogue existed in nearly all the great cities of the empire, and at Alexandria the ethnarch was regarded as its head. Naturally enough, the ambassadors of Christ at the outset of their mission sought in these numerous edifices an audience, and as long as they were tolerated continued there to preach the Gospel of the Son of God. Whether they ever held the weekly commemoration of the Resurrection there is open to doubt; and it is not at all likely that they observed the Lord's Supper there. But as the mode of worship was simple, consisting of prayer, song, reading and exposition, and as any Hebrew of age could lead in the services and address the people, there was no good reason why Christians and Christian teachers should not join in the exercises and avail themselves of the opportunity thus afforded to proclaim "the great salvation."

That at this time the followers of our Lord formed societies among themselves is manifest from the inscriptions of the several Pastoral Epistles, and from special directions given regarding the first day of the week and its observances. But that they were much more than rudimentary organizations does not appear; and that they were wholly independent of the influence and the protection of the synagogue cannot be proven. The ghost of Judaism haunted the Church for a brief season, even after the fall of Jerusalem; and probably the utilization of the synagogue was largely responsible for the persistency and insistency of the apparition. Moreover, this utilization gave to the early Christian communities a semi-legal recognition, without which, or some other ground of lawful standing, it would have been exceedingly difficult for them to have held any meetings at all. But the hour arrived in

¹ "Apostolic Age."

² Schaff, p. 456.

the latter part of the first century when this compromising and misleading connection came entirely to an end, and churches were seen to be distinct and separate from any other existing religious institution.

Baldwin Brown, referring to the gathering of Christ's followers in the upper chamber after the Ascension, writes: "All is simple and domestic, yet we have here the beginnings of what became in time the most wide-reaching and highly organized of human systems. An elaborate hierarchy, a complicated theology, were to arise out of the informal conclave and the memorial meal, and in like manner out of the homely meeting place would be developed the costly and beautiful forms of the Christian temple."¹ But the first step in this departure—a departure not entitled to be regarded as always a real advance—required the countenance, if not the assistance, of some legal provision. The people of the past were very like the people of the present in many respects; but in none more than in the tendency to enter into associations for all kinds of purposes. In the Roman empire there were trade guilds, dramatic societies, literary and dining clubs, and clubs for almost every conceivable object. The rulers of the land were often suspicious of these combinations, and sought to repress them; but as a general thing they were in the long run too strong for the Cæsars. "Trajan refused to permit an organization of one hundred and fifty firemen in Nicomedia, or to allow a few poor people to improve their fare by dining in company, on the express ground that such organizations involved political danger."² For the same reason he doubtless forbade the *sodalitates* of the Christians in Asia Minor. "While Rome was a republic, all citizens had the right of forming associations at will, but as soon as the empire began, it distrusted such associations, and Julius restricted them within the narrowest limits, for the Roman government now considered the Roman people as a danger to be guarded against."³ Hence various restraining edicts were issued, especially against what were called *collegia* and *sodalitates*; but exceptions were made in favor of the *collegia funeraticia*. These were benefit societies designed to secure to their members a respectable funeral and a proper place of burial. "These clubs or colleges collected their subscriptions in a treasure chest, and out of it provided for the obsequies of deceased members. Funeral ceremonies did not cease when the body or the ashes was laid in the sepulcher. It was the custom to celebrate on the occasion a feast, and to repeat that feast year by year on the birthday of the dead, and on other stated days. For the holding of these feasts, as well as for other meetings, special buildings were erected, named *scholæ*, and when the societies received gifts from rich members or patrons, the benefaction frequently took the shape of a new lodge room, or of a ground for a new cemetery, with a building for meetings."⁴ Under the laws permitting and regulating such societies as these, Christian communities were organized, and in this way acquired a kind of *legal status*, which, if it was not sufficient to guard them always from persecution, at least enabled them in times of respite from proscription, to prosecute their work with greater efficiency.

While the churches in reality differed radically from the benefit clubs with which they were classified, to the ordinary observer they were not dissimilar. They had kindred names for their officers and for their meetings. In both cases their members contributed to or received from a common fund, and sometimes even shared in a common feast. The Christianity of these early communities had its *esoterie*, as well as its *exoterie* side, and *exoterically* Christians were warranted in taking advantage of the protection afforded by the Roman law. Moreover, their registration as *collegia funeraticia* carried with it the right to hold property. This property originally was undoubtedly confined to cemeteries and *scholæ*. De'Rossi holds that from the beginning there was no hindrance to ownership of land for burial. Gallienus, according to Eusebius, did not confiscate the Christian burial places. It is reported of Alexander Severus

¹ "From Schola to Cathedral," p. 9.

² Ramsay, "Church in the Roman Empire."

³ Ramsay, "Church in the Roman Empire," pp. 358, 359.

⁴ Baldwin Brown, p. 17.

that he permitted a Christian congregation to occupy an inviting parcel of ground rather than a tavern-keeper. Wise monarch! The edict of Milan (313 A. D.) restored to the Church certain possessions. This appears to have been the first authoritative recognition of her right as a Christian body, and not as a mere benefit club, to have and to hold various estates. Subsequently (321 A. D.) Constantine permitted her to receive bequests for endowments. Of her resources in the private fortunes of her members nothing need be said. She required no standing in the courts to enable her to influence the wealth of her adherents. This was placed at her disposal in one way or another by the terms of the Christian covenant. But it certainly added to her independence when, in addition to the contributions of the people, the title to her meeting houses, basilicæ, refuges, schools, and cemeteries could legally be vested in herself, or her representatives. Her absolute and final separation from the synagogue was the real commencement of this independence. It likewise contributed to her dignity by rendering clearer her true character. And it facilitated her labors and ultimate triumph by relieving her from misleading complications and from misapprehensions regarding her message and mission.

This realization of ecclesiastical autonomy brought with it a change to a more compact and centralized form of government. As I have briefly pointed out, the churches of Christ during the first period of their history were not very elaborately or very thoroughly organized. They seem to have been democracies of the simplest type; all members, whether men or women, sharing in the responsibility of administration, presided over by officers popularly chosen, sometimes termed *presbuteroi* and again called *episkopoi*, elders and overseers. But there was hardly any discernible difference between them and the class we now describe as laymen. Laymen were not hindered from preaching; they brought their own gifts to the altar and were free to commune there; they voted in cases of discipline, sometimes administered ordinances, and were admitted to general councils. Tertullian expounds the accepted principle that ruled in the direction of Church affairs, when he says that in an emergency a layman may celebrate the eucharist as well as a bishop. "That which has constituted the difference between the governing body and the ordinary members is the authority of the Church"; and "where three Christians are, though they be laymen, there is a church." And Jerome indicates how the departure from the primitive method of governing began. He says that on account of divisions and heresies it was necessary to elect one of the elders or presbyters to preside over the rest; and the office tended toward permanency in its possessor. Gradually the functions of this office multiplied. He who bore it had to receive the offerings for the poor, and in times of persecution, when the congregation could not meet to vote, he had to care for their just distribution; and in negotiations with representatives of the State he had to act on behalf of the flock. With the increase of duties came an increase of dignity, which finally led to the idea of an authority superior to that vested in ordinary presbyters. This arrangement, in its earlier stages, was in many respects desirable, and was not destructive of the New Testament idea of Church polity. It gave strength and coherence to the Christian community, improved its discipline, and fitted it to withstand the assaults of envenomed antagonists. Later on, however, this advance was pushed so far as to become a positive retrogression. On this point Professor Ramsay has written with so much clearness and intelligence in his *Mansfield Lectures*, that I venture once more to quote from his pages:

"The first Christians . . . were not organized in a strict fashion, but were looser communities, in which personal influence counted for much and official station for little; and that the strict discipline of the Catholic Church was gradually framed to counteract the disintegrating tendency, in a political and a religious view alike, of the provincial character, organized the whole Church in a strict hierarchy of territorial character, parallel to the civil organization, and enabled the Church to hold together the Roman empire more firmly than the worship of

the emperors could ever do. Politically the Church was originally a protest against the over-centralization and against the usurpation by the imperial government of the rights of the individual citizen. It ended by being more centralized than the empire itself; and the Christian empire destroyed all the municipal freedom and self-government that had existed under the earlier empire."¹ Very few students will call in question the accuracy of this account. The process described went forward throughout the second and third centuries, and was immensely accelerated by the events which marked the dawning of the fourth. But the climax was not reached even then. Only at a period later than this historical survey contemplates can the complete workings of this ecclesiastical transformation be traced, and the Catholic Church be seen "sitting like a queen upon her throne, with her feet upon the neck of kings, and using the majesty of her sublime consolations, and the prestige of her long traditions, and the wealth of her splendid charities, to enslave rather than to free the world."²

This movement in the direction of ecclesiastical dictatorship was not permitted to proceed without protest. The most vigorous opposition to it developed where it was finally to have its chief seat, in Rome itself. Not until the middle of the second century did episcopacy enthrone itself in the capital of the empire, and not until the appearance of Victor, called "the first Latin bishop,"³ did its imperious tendencies stand distinctly revealed. He acted in a high-handed manner in excommunicating the Quartodeciman churches, and he assumed a degree of authority that contemporary bishops were unwilling to acknowledge. But among those who discerned the drift of things, and sought to interpose a check, Hippolytus was one of the earliest, and was the most prominent. He was a voluminous writer and a most courageous man. The controversy he waged was continued by others after his death in the Sardinian mines, to which place he was doomed in the consulship of Severus and Quintianus (235 A. D.). It was revived and carried on by Novatian, who steadfastly opposed the election of Cornelius to the episcopate (251 A. D.). This eminent presbyter demanded the restoration of ancient discipline. He saw that the approximation of the Church to the ideas of government then prevailing in the secular world opened the way for all forms of abuses. Morality, he claimed, had declined. Professors of religion, who in times of persecution had lapsed, refusing to be confessors, were being received back into fellowship; and the real distinction between the Church and the world was being effaced. Against these crying evils he raised his voice. Many sympathized with him, and on account of their strict views they were named "*Cathari*"—puritans. The opinions they maintained so ardently were condemned by the Synod of Antioch (252 A. D.); nevertheless, they were destined to outlive ecclesiastical censure. It will hardly be doubted at this late day that these dissidents were of great advantage to ancient Christianity. They served as a barrier in the way of a manifest trend toward unmitigated worldliness. In them was preserved and perpetuated the apostolic tradition regarding the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom. They were in reality the leaven which, after many centuries, should leaven the whole lump; and which, after much fermentation, should even help to purify the autocratic ecclesiasticism which in its inception they assailed so determinately. Puritanism had before it a long and honorable history subsequent to the period of its early struggles; and, however extravagant some of its endeavors may seem to the reflective mind, its rise in the third century was a positive gain to society, conserving as it did the true idea of religion, and securing to future generations its transmission. I think, therefore, I may be allowed to regard this schism as an advance, at a time when the onward movement in Church organization was being pushed to the extreme of hierarchical centralization.

Notable progress in the intellectual life of Christianity is distinctly observable from the accession of Hadrian. In the year 124 A. D. he issued a rescript to Minucius Fundanus,

¹ "Church in the Roman Empire," p. 445.

² Hatch, "Bampton Lectures," 23.

³ Rev. A. Plummer, "Church of the Early Fathers," p. 92.

proconsul of Asia, forbidding other than strictly legal proceedings in all efforts to suppress the new and growing heresy. According to Melito orders of a similar character were sent to all, or nearly all, of the provinces. This pause in the fury of paganism afforded all parties an opportunity for calm reflection. Then began to appear the apologetic literature, which, apart from its evidential value, revealed to the world the quality of mind that upheld the standard of faith. It was seen that strong men—men of thought and culture—were shaping the destinies of the ostracised Church. And this was made equally manifest in the more reasonable attitude then being assumed by its members toward the commonwealth. Previous to the reign of Hadrian, Christians, as a rule, objected to personal service in the armies of the State, and declined to plead before its tribunals, and refrained from seeking its honors and offices. This policy at the beginning was doubtless justified by peculiar circumstances; but its perpetuity would have proven disastrous. Happily it was abandoned, although writers like Tertullian and Origen continued to uphold it in theory when it was no longer practicable, on the ground that soldiers and government officials could not avoid countenancing heathen rites. The conservatism they advocated was impossible if the children of God were to live in society, and redeem it from its monstrous curses. Our Savior himself had prayed the Father that his disciples might be kept from the evil in the world, not that they should be taken out of the world. When, therefore, in the second century his followers discerned the great principle that the secular should be regarded as the sphere of the spiritual, they had risen to the just interpretation of his divine thought, and evinced a fresh and encouraging degree of intellectual activity. The importance and dignity of this change of front have been admirably set forth by the Rev. Dr. Döllinger in these strong sentences:

“All the incidents of public and social life, both civil and popular, were thoroughly interpenetrated by heathen customs, and colored by the prevalent worship; its symbols met the Christian at every step, and he was often entangled in religious acts before he recollected himself or could draw back. If he really wished to keep pure from all contact with it, he had almost to confine himself within the four walls of his house. But Christians felt that they were the salt of the earth, the city set upon a hill, that they must let the light of their faith and life shine before the Gentiles, and that everyone in his own sphere was called upon to care for the enlargement of the Church. And this constrained them to mix with the heathen, however great the danger to their souls in the midst of so many corruptions.”¹ And in doing this they placed the faith they professed in a clearer and truer light before men. In this way they vindicated it from the suspicion of narrowness and exclusiveness, and from the graver imputation of superstition and intolerant ignorance.

Another sign of intellectual advancement appeared in the development and definition of doctrine, which engaged the attention of the Church more and more from the dawning of the second century. Until the completion of the New Testament Canon a few years earlier, the material for a theological system was not available. While oral traditions and various statements in writing were in circulation, there needed the stamp of finality on the alleged revelation of truth before it could be sifted, analyzed, and its specific teachings classified. Reference has already been made to the conflict between the Jewish and Gentile types of Christianity, whose respective representatives are supposed to have been Saint Peter and Saint Paul. The legend which relates how both of these apostles met their death at Rome, where likewise it is assumed they were buried, is interpreted by Baur as expressing the finally consummated reconciliation of these primitive Christian parties. But the fact of their existence, however their differences may be minimized, witnesses to the growth of religious thought. Indeed, by some scholars even the Sermon on the Mount is regarded more as the granary where the imperishable seeds of doctrines are stored, than as a wide-spreading harvest field where ultimate forms salute and

¹ “First Age of the Church,” p. 377.

cheer the eye. Of this matchless discourse Baur has said: "It is the pure feeling of the need of salvation, still undeveloped, but containing within it the antithesis of sin and grace, and as such necessarily involving the reality of salvation." Following the line of the Master's instructions, an orderly progress from this point is traceable. He is constantly rising to higher levels of truth, until he is deterred from further advance by the limitations of his hearers. But even then he gives the promise of another Teacher who shall come and carry them yet onward in the knowledge and discernment of things divine. We see the effects of his gracious ministry in New Testament literature; but they do not cease with its completion. The Holy Spirit was to abide forever with the Church, if not for the purpose of supernaturally imparting additional revelations, assuredly for the purpose of illuminating what had already been disclosed, and that through his quickening influence the human mind might unfold and expand all that had been originally communicated by divine inspiration. While it is clear that this work of development was immensely accelerated by the peace secured to the Church through the reputed conversion of Constantine, there are signs of its progress in the two preceding centuries. The definition of the Homoousian dogma at the œcumenical council of Nicea, marks the completion of a stage in the history of doctrine. But leading up to this culmination we have the materialistic realism of Tertullian's idea of God; also the transcendentalism of Clement of Alexandria in which nearly all personal distinction between Father and Son is swallowed up; then the monarchism of Sabellius, so dangerous and subtle; and the Christology of Origen, in which the two views of unity and difference in the Godhead are so emphasized as in reality to lead to the struggle between Arianism and Athanasianism. Other questions had likewise been suggested during this earlier period of intellectual activity. The idealism of Gnosticism, which, like the fantastic syncretism of Philo, sublimated the facts of the Gospels until all reality was gone, had to be debated and discarded. Christianity was converted by this school into a theosophy. "It ceased to be a doctrine and became a Platonic poem. It ceased to be a rule of life and became a system of the universe." On the other hand, Montanism had to be checked also, as it swung to the opposite extreme of literalism, advocating rigorous penitential mortifications, wild ecstatic prophetic states, and an intense chiliastic belief, which in the nature of things arrested everything like historical development. In suppressing these and kindred errors, in fixing observances such as Easter, and in perfecting discipline, formularies of doctrine began to take shape. Perhaps the very earliest approach to a creed-form we have in the words of Irenæus in his polemic against "Heresies," about 180 A. D. He argues that the spiritual disciple has "a complete faith in one God Almighty, of whom are all things; and in that Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom are all things, and his dispensations by which the Son of God became man; also a firm trust in the Spirit of God, who hath sent forth the dispensations of the Father and the Son, dwelling with each successive race of men, as the Father willed."

If the reader would gain a further conception of the mental intensity and brilliancy of this era, it is only necessary to recall some of the leaders of thought and the controversies in which they engaged. There was Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, one of the first to advocate a millennium after the manner of our modern Adventists; and there was Quadratus, who dealt with the religion he defended as a moral and philosophical system. Then there arose Basilides at Alexandria, who defended dogmas of emanation and dualism. He taught that "mind," the highest Æon, dwelt in the man Jesus from his baptism to conduct the lost from Archon's fateful sway. Agrippa Castor opposed him, and much learning and more speculation delighted the Christians of the East. There appeared also a series of abstruse and mystical teachers, Valentine, Heracleon, Ptolemæus, and Marcus, who came dangerously near Cabbalism and kindred superstitions. Then Tatian drew attention to himself as a remarkable rhetorician. He assailed matter as the source of all mischief, and put in shape a document, still of value, called "Diatessaron." Marcion likewise erred and became the occasion of rancorous discussion. He

held that the Pauline element was the only true evangelical portion of the Christian documents. Other very singular opinions he maintained; and he and his followers disturbed the mental peace of every religious community where they were tolerated. Nor should there be overlooked in this survey the author of the "Shepherd," named Hermas; neither should Justin Martyr and Hegesippus be forgotten. And time would fail to tell of Theodotus, excommunicated by Victor of Rome; of Praxeas, who contended against Montanism; of Sabellius, who discerned a shadow of the Trinity in the sun's three properties of substance, shape, and light; of Origen, the chief writer among his contemporaries, and the spiritual sire of Gregory Thaumaturgus; of Cyprian, one of the strongest men the Church has produced; and a multitude of others who were prominent in their own day, but whose services are now forgotten. This array of thinkers and writers, more or less illustrious, dispels forever the notion that the two hundred years and more from the death of Saint John to the conversion of Constantine formed a period of intellectual torpor so far as Christianity was concerned. All such representations are wide of the mark. Throughout these centuries we behold burning anxiety to understand the will of God, earnest and prolonged reasoning on abstruse themes, and logical acumen of the first order. Everywhere is heard the clash of polemics, and the sounds, often harsh and strident, of argument and wrangling. But through the strife of thought and language there is gradually reached a clearer apprehension of the meaning of sacred truth; and from the protracted agony there emerges a more coherent and consistent statement of Christian doctrine. Slow of growth, and needing for development from the original seed the stress and storm of debate, nevertheless, the value of the well-defined plant and flower of doctrine more than compensates for what was sacrificed of ease and peace.

In these several respects, then, did Christianity advance, especially from the time when it was deprived of apostolic oversight to the hour when it began to be favored by imperial protection. And if "history is philosophy teaching by example," then may it not be that this remarkable progress discloses a law while chronicling a fact? Why should such progress be regarded as incapable of repetition? If there is a development of Christianity in the early centuries, why should there not be development ever afterward? Who will dare set the limit and say: "Thus far and no farther?" Judged by the movement we have described, Christianity can never be true to itself and remain stagnant and stationary. It must ever be extending and expanding; must ever be unfolding itself in larger thoughts, and ever be fulfilling itself in grander deeds; must always be becoming what it really is, and must always be what it is evermore becoming. A gradual revelation, such as Bible history from its first scenes to its last records, may well be taken as justifying the belief in gradual interpretation and application. Why should the principle hold good from Moses to Christ, and from Christ to Constantine, and then all at once and forever cease? Such a cessation would be as anomalous as the suspension of the law of growth in any department of nature, and is wholly incredible. The philosophical mind will not entertain such an exception to the uniformity that prevails in the spiritual, any more than it will harbor the notion that henceforward the physical will be governed differently from what it has been ever since it existed.

From this fundamental position, therefore, it follows, if Christianity advanced in the past, it will inevitably advance in the present. And if this is so, there should be no excited alarm felt at necessary changes and adjustments of exposition to increasing light, and of methods to new conditions. The intelligence of the nineteenth century ought surely to be equal to the intelligence of the second or third, when the religion of our Lord was in a transition state, and when its adherents continued to uphold it, notwithstanding its variations and struggling self-development. Religion is not a phenomenon whose total import has been exhausted by a few great theologians, and whose eternal dimensions have been immutably fixed by creed and catechism. It is the symbol of God, that is, of the Infinite, and, like the symbolism enshrined in

the magnitudes of the universe, it must be capable of yielding fresh and increasing knowledge of his nature and purposes. In one sense Christianity is ever the same; the same in its spirit and in its elements; but in another it is always changing; and in fullness and in operation the Christianity of to-morrow will not be as the Christianity of to-day. The advance of the cross cannot be arrested. It must onward; it must upward. By an indestructible principle, inherent in itself, it must be evolving its inexhaustible potentialities, and must be enlarging the sphere of its influence. This some conservative disciples may deplore; this some unreasoning believers may deny; and this some confirmed skeptics may construe into a sign of its merely human origin. But however men may doubt, decry or denounce, the advance of Christianity can no more be stayed than the mighty sweep of the perpetually revolving solar system through the shoreless splendors of the sidereal heavens.

CHAPTER V.

THE MINISTRY OF CHARITY.

THE concentration of property in the hands of the affluent few and the insatiable greed of the impoverished many precipitated the fall of the Roman republic. "Often," said Cato the Censor, addressing his fellow-citizens, "often have ye heard me complain how our commonwealth is laboring under two different vices, avarice and luxury, these two that have been the bane of all great empires." And Tiberius Gracchus, reviewing the evils of the times, which in the end subverted ancient liberty, is represented by his biographers as saying: "The wild beasts of Italy have their lairs and dens; but the men who fight and die for Italy have nothing else save light and air, as they stray, houseless and homeless, with their wives and children. Your generals do but mock their soldiers, in bidding them combat for their temples and their graves; for in such a multitude, not one has either the altar or the sepulcher of his fathers left him to defend. They go to war and perish, while others live at ease and in the midst of luxuries; and though they bear the name of lords of the world, there is not a handful of earth for them to call their own." And, referring to the moral and physical deterioration of the population resulting from the unequal distribution of wealth, he continued: "A warlike people has been reduced under our very eyes to poverty and desolation; and in their place has risen up a crowd of slaves, useless in war, and at all times faithless." The pernicious condition of things which he and a few other heroic souls condemned, exciting and almost justifying revolutionary discontent, rendered inevitable the dissolution of the then existing social order. For whenever the resources of a nation are controlled by a relatively small number of individuals and they who do most of the work receive least of the rewards, the enormously rich will evade every obligation and claim every privilege, while the hopelessly poor will be deprived of their privileges, and be crushed by the weight of their obligations; and the consequences of such unrighteous extremes must prove disastrous to all classes of the community, and to the peace, dignity, and well-being of the community itself.

It was perceived by Caius Lælius, friend of the younger Africanus, that the monopoly of wealth in the republic was gradually effacing the middle and lower orders of citizens, and that a remedy must be found. The problem, however, was too dense for his sagacity, and his misdirected efforts toward its solution only succeeded in earning for him the mocking sobriquet of "Sapiens." Nobler characters were destined to enter the lists against the oppression of the people — the Gracchi. The mother of these illustrious sons, daughter of Scipio Africanus, and

the widow of his defender, Sempronius Gracchus, was prouder of her hopes than of her memories, and molded the souls of her boys to heroism as nature molded their bodies to manhood. They were her richest jewels; and when both were dead, slain in discharging their solemn duty, she honored them and honored herself by the pathetically beautiful saying: "I can never be called unhappy, for it is I who gave birth to the Gracchi!" Tiberius, the elder of the two, when elected Tribune at the age of twenty-eight or twenty-nine, grappled manfully with the question of the hour, and laid an Agrarian law before the tribes. This measure limited the amount of land to be held as property by any individual citizen, provided for the surrender of domains that had in reality been usurped by the government, and arranged for compensation to be paid as an equivalent of buildings and other improvements on estates taken from the affluent. These proposals roused the hostility of the rich. Their author suffered from their operation as much as any man in Rome. But this consideration did not appease the indignation of the outraged aristocracy. Some generous spirits of his own favored gens sympathized with Tiberius, but the majority of the upper classes was uncompromisingly against him. The Senate embarrassed him by refusing the means necessary to carry out the law; and, worst of all, the people themselves were so clamorous for their share of the spoils, and so unreasonably impatient, and so greedy for fields and dwellings as to obstruct its execution. Moreover, the poor of the city and the poor of the country came into collision, and it became necessary to eject the latter from the lands they held to satisfy the demands of the former. Difficulties multiplied and enemies increased, and the few who had been personally benefited by the enactment of Agrarian statutes were so occupied and delighted with their new possessions that they paid no attention to the misfortunes of their benefactor, and abandoned him to defeat and assassination. But the efforts to ameliorate the social and personal condition of the population, after the lapse of a few years, were revived by Caius Gracchus, the brother of Tiberius, and were prosecuted with more enthusiasm, if not with greater fidelity. To break up the *latifundia*, estates of many square miles, was, however, next to impossible. They reappeared in the empire. Early in the Christian era half the province of Africa was owned by six individuals. And Pliny testified at a subsequent date that such estates had proven the ruin of Italy. They certainly withstood the assaults of the Gracchi. But Caius, at least, succeeded in furnishing employment to thousands on public works, and in stimulating many to experiment in the direction of frugality and industry. The real evil, however, had gone so far that he could not check it; and he was led to counteract suffering and wretchedness by fresh enactments, which perhaps were unavoidable but which entailed new miseries on the republic, and were destined to prove a destructive bane to the empire. From the days of Coriolanus down it had been necessary in seasons of scarcity to distribute grain among the inhabitants of Rome. But now it was decreed that the government at all times should furnish the city with corn at a fixed and moderate price, thus opening the way for the donations of food by the authorities, which in the empire developed into a widespread and ruinous measure of relief. It tended to paralyze energy, to obliterate self-respect, and to pauperize the greater part of the population. And thus steps that were honestly taken to improve the condition of the people became, through the absence of a spirit Christianity was divinely commissioned to supply, means to trample the masses down deeper and deeper in the mire of social hopelessness. As the reforms of the Gracchi sank below the horizon, it was seen that beneath the canopy of night the republic was a tempest-torn and seething ocean; and from the failure and devastation the student of history learns that mechanical and soulless systems of equalization, however perfect they may seem on paper, can never succeed in curing ills that have their source in the selfish passions and warring interests of mankind.

Marked economical improvement appeared with the establishment of the empire. With the cessation of the civil wars trade revived. The provinces were restored to peace. Through



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AUGUSTUS CAESAR.

confiscation and from other causes some great estates had been partitioned, and immense properties had changed hands. The sea had been cleared of pirates, and the highways of communication by land had been repaired and extended. Public confidence had been restored by the admirable administration of justice, and by the vigor with which the frontiers were guarded against the barbarians. But that there were still much poverty, suffering, and discontent need hardly be stated. However glowing the pictures painted of the blessings following the elevation of the Cæsars, the deep shadows of want and neglect cannot be obliterated. The will of Augustus "engraved on the bronze pillars at the mausoleum in Rome," is not reassuring as to the prosperity of the masses during his reign. According to Lanciani, who gives an account of its contents, his liberalities were surprising. "Sometimes they took the form of free distribution of corn, oil, or wine; sometimes of an allowance of money. He asserts that he spent in gifts the sum of six hundred and twenty millions of sesterii—nearly twenty six millions of dollars. Adding to this sum the cost of purchasing lands for his veterans in Italy (six hundred millions), of giving pecuniary rewards to his veterans (four hundred millions), of helping the public treasury (one hundred and fifty millions), and the army fund (one hundred and seventy millions), besides other grants and bounties, the amount of which is not known, we reach a total expenditure for the benefit of his people of ninety-one millions of dollars."¹ But wherefore the need of these immense benefactions, if indigence had practically disappeared, and the trend toward pauperism had been effectually checked? Does it not seem, from the excessive sums lavished by the emperor, that, however far the new *regime* surpassed the old in comfort and material prosperity, there was still left much to be desired? Nor was the advance, such as it was, long maintained. When Nero, in the middle of the first century, squandered a sum equalling one hundred millions of dollars on worthless dependents and sycophants, to say nothing of the increasingly extravagant expenditures of the State; when likewise, from his time the prætorians became more exacting in their demands; when Hadrian, at a comparatively early date in the second century, had to remit some thirty-five million arrears of tribute; when traders, like the father of the Emperor Pertinax, by dealing in lands, selling lots on credit at high rates of interest, amassed fortunes that enabled them to give ostentatious display of wealth in gladiatorial shows; and when large tracts of fertile land were withdrawn from agriculture to provide the rich with pleasure parks and gardens, it was manifest that the empire was rushing headlong toward bankruptcy. The burden of taxation had to be increased; and wars between rival candidates for the purple, and hostile demonstrations by barbarians, all tended toward the inevitable crisis. With multiplied acres taken out of cultivation, with capital devoted to luxury and not to production, with absentee landlords, and wealth more than ever accumulating in a few hands, with sharp lines of social distinction drawn between the rich and the poor, with borrowing at usurious interest to pay for municipal wastefulness, and with debased coinage and other fraudulent schemes, it was impossible to avoid the daily increase of abject pauperism and the final breakdown of national credit.

As these evils were growing and gaining ground, measures of relief were adopted by the authorities, and especially the old method of appeasing hunger by gratuitous distribution of corn. Julius Cæsar had reduced the number of recipients in his day from 320,000 persons to less than one-half, but under Augustus it arose again to 200,000, and later on it increased until, sometimes, it reached the enormous figure of 500,000 souls. Frequently salt, oil, and even lands, were given to the people, and, what is particularly worthy of note, in proportion as government bounty was enlarged the self-reliance of its dependents declined, and their demands became more clamorous and imperious. An explanation of this social phenomenon has been given by Lecky and is entitled to serious consideration, not merely because it prepares us to perceive the difference between State aid and the ministry of charity in the Church,

¹ "Pagan and Christian Rome," p. 175.

but because it emphasizes a peril constantly to be dealt with in relieving the unfortunate. He writes :

"The Roman distribution of corn, being merely a political device, had no humanizing influence upon the people, while, being regulated simply by the indigence, and not at all by the infirmities or character of the recipient, it was a direct and overwhelming encouragement to idleness. With a provision of the necessities of life, and with an abundant supply of amusements, the poor Romans readily gave up honorable labor, all trades in the city languished, every interruption in the distribution of corn was followed by fearful sufferings, free gifts of land were often insufficient to divert the citizens to honest labor, and the multiplication of children, which rendered the public relief inadequate, was checked by abortion, exposure, or infanticide."¹

It is not required of us in accepting this statement to conclude that the heathen world had never at times furnished examples of beneficent acts prompted by compassionate feelings. Even among the Greeks, Epaninondas, Cimon, and Bias were famous for kindly deeds, ransoming captives and dowering portionless girls. And among the Romans several patrician families were moved to send physicians, medicines, and comforts to the thousands who had been injured by the collapse of an amphitheater at Fidenæ; and Titus was not indifferent to the sufferings of those who survived the calamities that overtook Herculaneum and Pompeii. Lecky notices that Augustus gave money and corn for the support of poor children, and describes it as "an isolated act of benevolence." But from Trajan's time such benefactions became more frequent, "in his reign 5,000 poor children being supported by the government in Rome alone"; and his successors, Hadrian and Antoninus, providing generously for many helpless and distressed men and women. Yet, notwithstanding these exceptions and others we refrain from citing, it is apparent that the remedies devised by the State and the bounty extended by individuals were deficient in some essential respects, were inadequate either in motive or method, or otherwise they would not have intensified the virulence of the disease they essayed to alleviate. Evidently society could not be saved from increasing poverty merely by government appropriations, or by enlarging the *sportulæ* bestowed by patricians on their needy clients, or by a few spasmodic gifts wrung from the reluctant heart of opulence by grave public misfortunes, any more than the same end could be compassed in the preceding era exclusively by limiting estates and distributing the acres of the proprietors among those who had never honestly earned the right to their possession.

When Christianity appeared she necessarily confronted this problem of growing pauperism, which the Roman world was never able to solve. The birth of her founder had, indeed, occurred when the empire under Augustus gave promise of restored prosperity, and when auspicious signs of social improvement gleamed on every hand. But, as we have seen, these bright prospects were soon overcast, and when the Church emerged from her obscurity, the distress of the people was deepening and rapidly tending to its lowest depth; and she was impelled by the life that stirred within her to take up the task which the world-powers found altogether too vast for their sagacity and resources. The ministry of charity in the Church of the first three centuries is doubtless the most stimulating and instructive series of philanthropic endeavors ever chronicled by the historian; and if the example she then set had been adhered to, and the extremes into which she unconsciously fell had been avoided, the revival of the evils she fought to suppress would not now perplex and plague anew every great community in civilized lands.

It is one of the singular illusions of our day that primitive Christianity was more concerned about man's happiness in the hereafter than it was with his welfare on this side of eternity. Hence much has been gushingly written regarding modern religious progress. With

¹ "History of European Morals," Vol. II, p. 80.

great complacency its present interest in temporalities has been pointed out by certain reformers and clergymen, who refer to it as though the movement were due entirely to themselves, and were absolutely new under the sun. It must be conceded to these egotistic enthusiasts that a marked improvement has taken place of late in the attitude of Christian bodies toward the grave questions which agitate modern society. But it should be recognized that this is only a return to an original position, and is not by any means a novelty. How it came to pass that the followers of our Lord drifted from what may be termed the secular aspects of their mission, and for a season preached in such a way as to leave the impression that their exclusive business was to save men out of the world, and not to save them in it, and not to save the world with them, I will not attempt to recite. Only I resent the imputation that this was the governing ideal in the first ages of our blessed faith. Such was not the case. In the New Testament we read more about earth than about heaven, more about this life than the future one, more about time, with its duties and trials, than about eternity, with its delights and triumphs. This is written with a distinct recognition of the fact that our religion is primarily a redemption and afterward a reform; that it begins with faith in the unseen and so continues in works toward the seen. There is no desire to invalidate the essentially supernatural and spiritual side of Christianity, but only to protest against the assumption that it was not at the beginning equally practical and social. The success of its ministry in temporal things unquestionably depended on its spirituality, and on the everlasting felicity it proclaimed; but the reality of this temporal ministry cannot be overlooked or belittled without grievous injustice. This it is our duty to affirm, and if need be to reaffirm. The history of religion as revealed in the Bible is intimately blended with national development and prosperity. Its rewards are mainly such as pertain to earth—wealth, renown, peace, security, and honor; and its punishments are of the same general kind—poverty, shame, strife, peril, and disgrace. So manifest is this in the Old Testament that some writers, like Warburton, fail to find there distinct intimations of immortality; while, in the New, it is now suspected that most of the passages in the “Apocalypse,” which have heretofore been applied to the heavenly state, have primary reference to the saints in this world. But in addition to this, beginning with the Acts, we have in the Sacred Canon a record of recommendations, arrangements, movements, such as the appointment of deacons, the oversight of the poor, the laying by in store each Lord’s day for the necessities of the saints, the respect due to civil authorities, the recognition of slaves as brethren, the injunctions regarding the sanctity of marriage and the exaltation of manual labor—all going to show that Christianity contemplated, from its earliest days, the regeneration of society as well as the regeneration of the individual. If this work is now engaging its attention as not before for several decades of years, we should be grateful, but we should understand that the disciples are simply going back to the original starting-point, and are not the authors of a new departure—all of which is abundantly corroborated by what is known of the prominence given to charity in the organization and service of the early Christian communities.

It occupied no subordinate place in the affairs of the “household of faith.” Charity in the ancient Church was not a matter of secondary importance, receiving scant attention, or only monthly mention on the close of the great commemorative ordinance. It was not regarded as an incident or a diversion, but as one of the chief concerns of a Christian congregation. To have dealt with the subject superficially, fretfully, and hurriedly, as though it were an intruder and had no real claim for sympathetic consideration, would have been denounced by the primitive saints as disloyalty to Christ who had commended the poor to the care of his people. I have mentioned in a previous chapter certain benefit societies, particularly the *collegia funeraticia*, which yielded certain advantages to their members. Some writers have hastily classed these as eleemosynary, when in fact they were only a form of mutual provident associations, in which for

definite dues paid specific returns were made. Their formation was principally prudential not philanthropical, and they were no more charitable in spirit and scope than are our modern life assurance companies.

But what such organizations in the empire did for a pecuniary equivalent, the Church did, and even more, for love of God and man. While she undoubtedly attached great importance to the salvation of souls, we need have no hesitancy in believing, on the testimony of her institutions and literature, that she sought with almost equal diligence to provide for the necessities of the body. Indeed, were we to judge from what we know of her elaborate arrangements for the care of the poor, we might easily drift into the erroneous impression that she was exclusively devoted to temporalities. In the Acts we have an account of the election of seven deacons, whose supreme business it was to look after the indigent; but we have not there a single word about choosing workers for "Inquiry Rooms," or for "Strangers," and "Outlook Committees," whose sole aim it should be to bring the negligent under the influence of the Gospel or explain to the troubled conscience the way of life. It is also to be noted that the pastor of churches in these formative times did not hand the benevolences of his charge over to the sole management of his deacons. To the official who served as chairman, and who was foremost in administration, there came to be applied the name of *episkopos*, *i. e.*, "overseer"; and it is supposed that as this name was given in Asia Minor and Syria to officers of heathen associations who superintended the finances, that it came to be bestowed on the elder of the Church selected to be leader, because to him was intrusted the offerings, and because he was mainly responsible for their fair and honest distribution. A "bishop," when the name became current among the saints, denoted one who was in a sense chief of almoners, having committed to him the indigent and wretched. Whatever other functions he may have exercised—and unquestionably they were varied and solemn—he was never relieved of the obligation to be first and foremost in furnishing assistance. It never occurred to him to plead that he was so busy preparing sermons or holding gospel meetings that he had no time for personal visitation of the suffering, or for faithful inquiry into the needs of the dependent. Such a statement would have shocked the entire brotherhood: for in those early days, as in the time of Jerome, "The glory of a bishop lay in relieving the poverty of the poor."

Likewise would the Christian community have been horrified if the oversight and succor of the unemployed, of widows, orphans, and destitute strangers had been undertaken reluctantly, and had been carried forward coldly and niggardly, as though the beneficiaries were impostors, having no claim on human sympathy and generosity. Charity in the ancient Church was not administered in a perfunctory almshouse fashion. But, while care was taken to prevent fraud, everything was done to sanctify and exalt the service. The gifts of the congregation were brought to the altar, and were accepted by the bishop, who in turn invoked God's blessing on them. Then, when they were distributed, they were sent out from the altar, with this blessing still resting on them. In this manner the great truth was suggested that temporal ministrations should be religious in spirit; that sacrifices for the social welfare of the race are sacred in God's sight; and that, as the Fathers ever refer to these gifts as sacrifices, they rank in dignity next to the sublime oblation presented once for all on behalf of man's redemption from sin and death. So, likewise, the recipient was taught, on receiving his portion from the altar, that he was not forsaken by Providence, but that God was watching over him and providing for his necessities. It was not the brother he saw first of all when he ate and was filled, but the All Father, "from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift." He was not educated, therefore, to believe that he had a right to the possessions of his more prosperous brother, and that he might in a fit of desperation take him by the throat and demand from him his living; but he was trained to expect deliverance from the Almighty in seasons of extremity. The method pursued interposed the Church between the benefactor and the beneficiary, thus guarding the

one from pride and the other from sycophancy, and bringing both to a realizing sense of their relation to the Supreme Being. And as Uhlhorn effectively puts it: "It was just at the altar where all the members of the Church, both rich and poor, know themselves to be one in the Lord, that the equalization of property between rich and poor by giving and receiving also took place in love."¹ Nor was there any compulsion used, unless it was the compulsion of love, to extract from the prosperous the means requisite to help the children of adversity. Tertullian writes: "Everyone deposits a moderate contribution monthly, if he chooses and if he can, for no one is forced, but each contributes voluntarily."² Thus also Justin Martyr testifies: "Those who are able and who desire to do so, give of their free will as much as they choose. What is collected is deposited with the president, and with it he supports the widows and orphans, and those who through sickness or any other cause are in want, assists prisoners and strangers, and provides for the needy in general." This generous freedom must have gone far toward preventing the degradation of charity. What was bestowed was no forced loan, but was the spontaneous surrender of riches which love gladly set apart for the good of the race.

The pains taken to magnify this ministry proves conclusively how highly it was prized by the Church, and how thoroughly it occupied her thought and labors. In her supplications it was prominent. The rich were taught to pray for the poor, and the poor for the rich, on the assumption that prayer makes clearer reciprocal obligations. Moreover, all classes joined in petitions on behalf of the hungry, naked and homeless ones. The most ancient forms of prayer extant are devoted largely to these objects; and thus this entire ministry was lifted up to the highest plane of piety, and was invested with moral and spiritual grandeur. And, as yet the more to accentuate this preëminent dignity, holy women were in the first ages of the Church consecrated to the work of philanthropy. That there were deaconesses in the congregations of the faithful, and that they were set apart to the service of charity is now generally conceded by ecclesiastical historians. It was impossible for bishops or laymen to visit the homes of women in distress without giving rise in heathen communities to possible slanders. Agencies, therefore, had to be engaged, whose movements were not liable to excite gross suspicions. Every precaution was taken to avoid misapprehension, but the offices of tender charity were not permitted to be suspended or impeded. The fact that women were enlisted in this cause, even on behalf of their own sex, at a time when public opinion was decidedly against their participation in activities outside the household, goes to show that the Church was so deeply impressed by its sacredness that she ignored conventionalities rather than suffer it to be narrowed or restrained. Although she respected in some degree the prejudices of society, she felt far more for the necessities of the human family. The latter must be met at any cost, short of character and reputation—that is, short of the very power necessary to success in religious labors. With her, fashion and custom counted for little, and philanthropy for everything. She quietly pushed aside from her path the senseless usages of the world, that love might pursue its mission; and in doing so she has taught once for all, not only that woman has as large a place in the service of goodness as man, but that the goodness which nurses the sick, succors the oppressed, and feeds and clothes the destitute is as precious in God's sight as Temple-building and Temple-treading.³

This general conclusion is further established by the vastness and variety of the benefactions which distinguished the ancient Church. Her liberality is almost incredible in these days of calculating benevolence, in which her successor has, for the most part, handed over to outside organizations and municipal boards what was directly committed to her by Christ. Unquestionably, the demands on the bounty of the faithful in the earlier times were more numerous and more imperative than in ours; but this only intensifies the contrast between the past and the present, and brings into clearer relief the magnificent generosity of the people

¹ "Christian Charity in Ancient Church," p. 146.

² *Ibid*, p. 142.

³ Isaiah i, 12 (Revised Version).

who for three centuries confronted, as at last they confounded, the heathen world. Perhaps an estimate of its extent may not be without salutary influence on modern congregations that have of late years measurably departed from the original ideal of saintly service in temporal things.

Dr. Alfred Plummer quotes a passage from Eusebius as showing that 1,500 widows and orphans were sustained by the Christians of Rome when Cornelius was the most prominent ecclesiastic of the city (250 A. D.).¹ At a later date the Church in Antioch supported 3,000 dependents. Cyprian collected an amount equal to £1,000 for the ransom of prisoners, at a period when persecution had crippled the resources of God's children. It is also to be remembered that this famous man, when he was converted (245 A. D.), sold his patrimony and gave the proceeds to the poor. This surrender of lands and money for the alleviation of suffering was not uncommon in the age following that of the apostles. But, whether carried to this extreme or not, everyone who owned or earned anything set aside a part for the benefit of the less fortunate. Giving, then, was general, withholding was exceptional. Nor could it be otherwise, if Christianity was to advance in the presence of its adversaries. The needs to be met were so numerous that only could they be honored by substantial unanimity in offerings. The new dispensation claimed to have a message for the poor, and naturally the poor thronged and crowded to hear its encouraging words. These neglected classes in the heathen world had not thrust themselves on the attention of religion; but religion had invited them to come and listen. Hence they came. They were looking for a "door of hope"; they were hungry for cheer and they were ready to give any teacher audience. And it was very far from the thought of the apostolic or sub-apostolic Church to pose as the friend of the needy, and then say with frigid and icy politeness to the starving: "Be filled," or to the naked: "Be clothed." In times more modern such pretense may have passed unrebuked, but it would not have been tolerated in the earlier centuries. Christian congregations in these latter days may claim to be especially interested in the destitute, as many do, and yet scarcely raise a finger in their behalf, and thus lose, as many have lost, their hold on the confidence of working people; but such unjustifiable and cheap professions would have proved fatal at the beginning. Then the lowly, the despised, the slave, the outcast, were welcomed to the cross; and they were not disappointed. They were dealt with as brethren and sisters and equals before the bar of God, and were lovingly taught and generously succored. It is not difficult to imagine how numerous must have been the objects of compassion in these circumstances. Multitudes pressed forward to accept the gospel of charity, and were won by it to the gospel of grace and goodness. Doubtless not a few availed themselves of the first without embracing the second. Imposters were frequent then as now. But the Christians of those times did not permit the falseness of some beneficiaries to steel their hearts against the true; and they never could have understood the pitiable casuistry of more recent years that excuses the withholding of aid from all on account of the trickery of some. Measured by the extent of the poverty in the Roman world, the bounty of the saints who fought the battle against heathenism was simply incomputable. For it should not be forgotten that while they did good to "the household of faith," they never failed to consider the privations of the masses who were yet aliens to its joys.

Tertullian wrote: "All men love their friends; Christians alone love their enemies."² "If we show kindness only to our own," says Cyprian, "we do no more than publicans and heathen. As Christians who would become perfect, we must overcome evil with good, love our enemies, as the Lord exhorts, and pray for our persecutors. Since we are born of God, we must show ourselves to be the children of our Father, who continually causes his sun to rise, and from time to time gives showers to nourish the seed, exhibiting all these kindnesses, not only to his people, but to aliens also." And the reason for this spirit of universal benevolence is comprehensively expressed in the eloquent remonstrance of Lactantius: "Why do ye select

¹ "Church of the Early Fathers," p. 102.

² Uhlhorn, "Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism," p. 204.

persons? He is to be esteemed by you as a man, whoever implores you, because he considers you a man." Likewise Dionysius, in an extract preserved by Eusebius, gives an affecting illustration of the self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice inspired by this exalted enthusiasm for humanity. Referring to the pestilence that ravaged Alexandria under Gallienus (265 A. D.), he writes: "Most of our brethren, in the fullness of their brotherly love, did not spare themselves. They mutually took care of each other, and as, instead of preserving themselves they attended on the sick, and willingly did their service for Christ's sake, they joyfully laid down their lives with them. Many died after having been by their exertions the means of restoring others. The best among the brethren, many presbyters, deacons, and distinguished laymen, ended their lives in this manner, so that their deaths, which were the result of piety and strong faith, seem not inferior to martyrdom. Many who took into their hands and laid upon their bosoms the bodies of Christian brothers, closed their mouths and eyes, and reverently interred them, soon followed them in death. It was quite different with the heathen. They thrust out those who were beginning to sicken, fled from those who were dearest, and cast the dying into the streets; they let the dead lie unburied in their desire to avoid infection, which nevertheless they could not escape."

While in such supreme moments the heroism of charity is manifested, nevertheless, its commonplace ministrations afford the true criterion of its extent. We return, therefore, to the review of its ordinary operations in the ancient Church. Care was taken that none of the brethren should become paupers. What is now called outdoor relief was common. The almoners visited the homes of the poor, and carried with them food and clothing, and occasionally money. Gifts of the latter were limited and rare, because money could more readily be abused than supplies of the necessities of life; and then it was required for special services in which other offerings would have proven useless. When men abandoned callings proscribed by Christian teachers, they were not permitted to suffer want. If they turned aside from the theatrical profession, if they ended all connection with gladiatorial exhibitions, as trainers, officers, or judges, and if they refused longer to buy and sell articles employed in pagan worship, they were not heartlessly left to starve. Had it been otherwise; had it been, as it frequently has been since, that desperate characters, social ruffians, and fallen women, having been exhorted to repent, had found all avenues to honorable self-support closed against them, and no other alternative remaining but to return to sin or starve, Christianity would not have multiplied converts from the submerged classes. The churches in those early times were not exclusive; they were not aristocratic clubs—little groups of paltry, purse-proud individuals—seeking for social distinction through ecclesiastical affiliations. They were rather companies of honest, earnest souls, who were bound together by the determined purpose to rescue their fellow-beings, even the most vile, from sin and shame; and who to effect so noteworthy an end were willing to associate with the redeemed and aid them personally in every possible way. And as they generously provided for the unfortunate who came to them, they were always considerate of the unfortunate who were of their membership. Widows and orphans were looked on as a sacred and precious charge. The former, as far as possible, were set apart to philanthropic work, and in this way supported themselves. They were not encouraged to marry a second time, and probably in the latter portion of the second century they were collected into families by themselves for greater security. Fatherless and motherless children were conscientiously educated. The boys especially were taught trades and were furnished with tools; and the elevation of labor and the beginning of manual training schools may be traced to these early endeavors to equip the young for usefulness. The Church, at this period of her history, did not canonize pious laziness and mendicancy. She insisted that they who would not toil should not eat, and she withheld her bounty from the willfully idle and shiftless. In adopting orphans, therefore, she aimed to make them self-reliant, upright, and frugal; and she



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FROM MARTYR'S TOMB.

tried to so guide the girls that they would wed only men with these virtues, and sought to develop the boys into just such men. Moreover, feeling that she was appointed of God to the loving oversight of the helpless, she extended her charities to the slave. There is no evidence that she openly antagonized slavery as an institution of the empire. But she proclaimed the unity of the race, and the natural brotherhood of mankind. She hence came to the protection of the oppressed. The bondsman stood on a level with the freeman in the communion of the faithful. Much was done by the saints to mitigate his lot. They themselves were restrained from cruel exactions by anathemas against all who presumed on their strength to abuse the weak. It would seem, also, from a passage in the Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp, where he exhorts slaves not to long for the Church to ransom them, that manumission was receiving considerable attention. But as yet it was not common. The slave was invested by his membership in the Christian society with all the attributes and dignities of manhood, and was eligible to any of its offices. Thus Callistus who succeeded Zephyrinus as bishop of Rome (219 A. D.) was born in bondage. He triumphed over the disadvantages of birth and fortune, and became chief prelate of a mighty city. His elevation was not exceptional, but it illustrates the fact that a new principle was working—love for humanity, wherever found and in whatever condition.

It was this that prompted the respect shown for the slave who was striving to be free in Christ Jesus. Likewise, it was this love that impelled to acts of hospitality, and to generous sacrifices on behalf of captives in the mines, and for the comfort of those noble men and women who were doomed to martyrdom. The stranger was welcome to a refuge in the household of his brother Christian. He was not thrust away, exposed to the perils of a vast heathen community. He was greeted with a kiss and served with solicitous zeal. And they who had been exiled to Sardinia and elsewhere on account of the faith were not forgotten in the ministrations of charity. Letters were written to them. They were reminded of the sympathy of their fellow-disciples; and they were assured that those dependent on them were not neglected or suffered to want. Thus their courage and their faith were sustained, and they were enabled, to the confusion of their foes, to "rejoice in tribulation."

If anything is lacking in this picture of brotherly interest and compassion, it is supplied by the Agapæ, or feasts of love, as observed before Tertullian's defection to Montanism, and long after the earlier communistic rhapsody at Jerusalem had ceased to be imitated. The spreading of a common table where rich and poor met on terms of perfect equality, reminding the former that he was no higher than his brother, where also the slave and the stranger could sit down together, had in it a touch of delicate consideration for those whose social standing was humble, and whose pecuniary means were straitened. Here no distinctions of rank were discernable. Here, likewise, grew the idea of fraternity that voluntarily gave of its substance for the good of all, and that sought through temporal blessings the advancement of spiritual life. The insight Tertullian gives into the observance of this meal shows clearly that, while it contributed to earthly human needs, like the charity of which it was at once the expression and the celebration, it was made to further the immortal destiny of the soul. This is his description, and its reproduction here may fittingly close our examination of the manifoldness of philanthropy in primitive Christian assemblies: "As the motive of the feast is an honorable one, you may estimate accordingly the regulation of the rest of our conduct, how it corresponds with our religious duty, which allows of nothing mean, nothing superfluous. We do not sit down to table till prayer to God has been first tasted; we eat as much as the hungry need, we drink no more than serves the modest. We appease our hunger as those who know that we must pray to God even during the night; we talk with the consciousness that the Lord hears us. After we have washed hands and the lamps are lighted, the summons to praise God goes forth to all, and he who is able to impart anything out of the Word of God, or from his own mind, does so. Herein lies the test as to how we have drunk. The whole meeting closes with

prayer, and we do not separate to commit improprieties in the streets, but continue our practice of decency, because we are not coming from a drinking bout, but from an exercise of propriety and modesty."

That to the ministry of charity in the ancient Church much of her success was due in overcoming pagan antagonism is admitted by all who have taken pains to acquaint themselves with the facts. Contemporary heathen writers express their admiration of a grace that achieved so potently, and multiplied its offices so wonderfully. They acknowledged its power. It is not that they accused Christianity of seducing the adherents of the older creeds by bribes of money; but that they perceived the influence of its benevolence on the character and conduct of its recipients. The mendicant was relieved; but, at the same time, he was quickened, by the way in which he had been aided, to industry and diligence. But he not only received; for, as soon as he possessed anything, he bestowed. There was a ceaseless interchange of resources; the strong succoring the weak, the rich relieving the poor. And such were the spirit and method of this commerce that from it was evolved a new and noble type of manhood. While mutual dependence grew, individual independence attained remarkable proportions. The man was not lost in the society. He was not pauperized by the gratuity on which for the time being he subsisted. But, rather, the love that inspired and accompanied the bounty roused in him every latent and slumbering energy to render its continuance unnecessary. He was so fully instructed in the dignity of humanity, as God-begotten and Christ-redeemed, that he could not endure the thought of degradation to the level of a parasite. The brilliant triumphs of charity in morally transforming the multitudes it provided for were so dazzling, that, even long after its springs had become polluted and its fair image had been defaced by superstitions, their very memory stimulated the further advancement of Christianity. And, even after it had been so completely perverted as to be more of a curse than a blessing, the fame of its first victories was cherished, and the loss of the grace by which it had wrought so transcendently lamented with tears. For there has always been a vision, more or less clear, of the truth that, if the Church should ever again be charitable with the charity of the early centuries, she could easily make herself mistress of the world. But as long as the modern tendency is followed, such a result is impossible. That tendency is toward machinery, red tape, corporations, and systems, all absolutely soulless. The demand is for wheels, for wheels within wheels, but with no "living creature" in the wheels. Admirable as such arrangements may be in producing inanimate things, they are cruelly fatal when they are copied in dealing with thinking, sentient, immortal beings. A man in poverty needs the touch of a *man's* hand, and the throb of a *man's* heart, and not the cold scrutiny of a functionary. In this ministration, as in others of a similar kind, the letter killeth; it is the spirit that quickeneth.

Among the patrician families of the empire, landscape gardening was carried to the extreme of absurd artificiality. No tree, shrub or flower was allowed to grow naturally. Every plant was cut, hewn, twisted and forced into the most singular of semblances. In the Laurentine estate of Pliny the younger, and in the extensive grounds of Mæcenæ, hedges, bushes, groves were shaped into architectural forms; vegetation was trimmed to assume geometrical figures, and foliage was so bent as to imitate letters, spelling the names of the owner and the artist. Everything was stiff, angular, and pedantic. If the thought of the *topiarius*, or head gardener, who conceived it all was pregnant, the image certainly was not picturesque. For what the landscape gained in regularity and precision, it lost in expression and loveliness. It might elicit the encomiums of a perverted taste, but could never command the enthusiasm of a poetic temperament. Such gardening resembled too closely the painted scenery of a theater for it to rouse and exalt the spiritual in man. Equally impotent is charity when it is subject to the pruning knife, and loses its simplicity and artlessness. When it is systematized out of all resemblance to its real self, and becomes a mere thing of rule and order, a mass of artificiality,

in which skillfully appear the names of liberal donors rather than the heart of Christ, it may occasionally serve some practical end, but it never can refine, uplift, and renovate the nature with which it has to deal. But let it return to its original freedom and spontaneity, and be true to its own spirit, and its ministry will now be as fruitful in good as ever it was in the past. Alms grudgingly given, or alms hurriedly bestowed to escape importunity, and accompanied by no effort, and, what is worse, by no desire, to abate the ills that foster indigence, are of no special advantage to individuals or communities. What is required in our day is something more than a pitiable dole, more even than Agrarian laws, and more than complicated organizations—HUMANITY, the humanity of the early Church, that first of all treated every man considerately, fairly, tenderly, humanely; and then in emergencies generously and bountifully, even to the point of personal self-sacrifice. This is what is needed. This is indispensable, and in proportion as the old ideal is newly realized will Christianity be successful in its gracious mission. Our duty at this crisis is expressed by a poet in lines of imperishable beauty:

“Feel for all as brother man!
Rest not in hope, want’s icy chain to thaw
By casual boons and formal charities;
Learn to be just, just through impartial law.
Far as you may, enact and equalize,
And what ye cannot reach by statute draw
Each from his fountain of self-sacrifice.”¹

In the second century the obscuration of charity began; and, though the history of its total eclipse belongs to a period not embraced in the present narrative, its origin and primary stages, occurring as they do within its limits, call for special consideration. The writings of Origen and Cyprian reveal a tendency to magnify good works, and to invest them with some degree of saving efficacy. Cyprian went so far as to declare that, unless God “had opened to us a way of salvation through works of mercy, that we might by alms wash off the defilements of sin,” baptism itself would have been of no avail. From this time onward almsgiving comes more and more to be regarded as an atonement. It is lauded as a means of deliverance from guilt; and is urged on believers, not so much as a generous expression of love for others, as an expiation for the spiritual benefit of self. The downward trend was rapid, and soon after the accession of Constantine the bottom of the incline was reached. Selfishness usurped the throne and assumed the name and the robes of charity. Henceforward a pitiable travesty of this divine grace was all that seemed left to the Church. Making allowance for many remarkable exceptions, the majority of professed Christians sacrificed their possessions merely in the interest of their own souls. They invested their money in heaven as worldly-minded citizens invested theirs in desirable lots in Rome. Profit, not philanthropy, was their motive, and none the less real because the payment was not expected until after death. The commercial spirit was fatal to the benevolent spirit. When the distribution of food and clothing was converted into a pious device by which a throne could be obtained in heaven, just as donations of corn and wine had been used as a political expedient to secure a throne on earth, the humanizing influences that had proceeded from actual charity were felt no longer. Offerings increased in number. Hospitals were built, orphanages were founded, missions were commenced, magnificent churches were erected, and other works of devotion were projected, and yet the people were not advanced in godliness and industry. Decline in manhood was unhappily prevalent, and apparently the more abundant the gratuities, the lower the social degradation. The selfishness of reputed benefactors was speedily reproduced in the beneficiaries. If it was not argued out logically, it was acted on consistently, that the duty of the idle and indigent was simply to remain idle and indigent; otherwise, how could the rich obtain the rewards of endless felicity?

¹ Wordsworth.

To labor and thus to suppress poverty would be to deprive the affluent of their opportunity to earn a seat in the coming kingdom. Manifestly such a course would be inconsiderate and unfair. Moreover, what more reasonable than to conclude that if shiftlessness and dependence enabled the liberal to reach a higher station in heaven, there must be something meritorious in these tattered qualities, which, if duly cherished for the sake of the opulent, might even serve to increase the everlasting glory of their victims?

In some such way as this the early victories of charity were reversed by the substitution of a counterfeit. Christianity as an institution increased in wealth. She added acre to acre, house to house, even principality to principality, and outvied earthly monarchies in possessions and splendor; but her constituents became poorer and poorer. Her secular glory became her spiritual shame. Her vestments dazzled; her jeweled altars enchanted; her stately palaces, rich in costly paintings and marble, appealed to the imagination; but the beset, hungry, and half-naked worshipers were her constant and increasing reproach. She had gained much, she had lost more. Tinsel for gold, paste for diamonds, and marvelous creations in stone for more marvelous sway in souls of men—such was her wretched traffic, by which she purchased security at the cost of freedom, and regal authority at the cost of spiritual power.

Lord Salisbury, in his famous address delivered at Oxford (1894) before the British Association, called attention to a case of butterflies in the South Kensington Museum, whose wings when closed exactly resemble the leaves of the tree on which it lives. When extended the wings are beautiful with brilliant colors. But when the butterfly is most glorious it is most exposed to peril. When it unfolds its conspicuous charms, the merops, a small bird that feeds on insects, is ready to assail its life. Safety lies in resting on a leaf, for the imitation is so complete that no one—bird or man—would suspect the tiny creature to be other than part of the foliage.

The apostles constantly admonished the saints not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of their mind. By disobeying this injunction they might escape their foes, but they would then sacrifice those distinctive peculiarities which render them of service to mankind. If they made themselves like the society in which they dwelt, they might not be attacked, but they would surely conceal the real beauty of their character and mission. To open their wings, to fly, to reveal what they were, and to do what they were winged to accomplish, was at once to differentiate themselves from others, and to expect success from dissimilitude and not from resemblance. And, in the same manner, if the charities of the Church are to effect only good and not evil, they must not be conceived in the spirit of the world, nor be administered according to its methods. The poorhouse system, as carried out by various municipalities, religious societies should blush to copy. And they should be equally careful not to propose the substitution of communism for charity. Such a scheme strikes at benevolence itself. Communism would not be likely to succeed in abolishing social ills, and in the effort to establish it, as its ultimate basis is selfishness, charity would expire. Endeavors in this direction by Christian people always seem to be prompted by a desire to transfer the obligation of the Church toward the poor to the State. There is an element of heartlessness and cowardice in it. We may rest assured that these tactics of evasion will in the end prove as abortive as the unhappy reforms of the Gracchi. For no measure, however judicious it may appear to worldly wisdom, can put an end to poverty and its attendant miseries that fails to bring the helper and helped into personal relations of love and sympathy. Charity, to be in the highest and grandest sense successful, must to the end of time seek its prototype in the method of him who came to redeem mankind: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."¹

¹ II. Corinthians viii, 9.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MEMORIALS OF FAITH.

THERE is perhaps no spot on earth more sadly fascinating than an ancient and crowded cemetery. Whether it be Bunhill fields in London, or old Gray Friars in Edinburgh, or the old Granary in Boston, the heart must grow tender as the feet wander among the humble or stately abodes of those who have been so long dead that no friend survives to recall their features or recount their deeds. The hands that once decorated with flowers these receptacles of death have themselves become dust; and the spots consecrated by affection in the distant past to perennial beauty have become tiny wildernesses of briars and weeds. Melancholy thoughts will rise in presence of the ruined mausoleum of an Augustus, or when contemplating the fallen tombstone, mossy with age, that marked the resting place of some village dignitary. Thus, then, do all things tend toward inevitable decay, and thus does envious oblivion war against our graves.

But, apart from mere sentimental reflections, each venerable necropolis arrests attention and solemnly impresses by the memorials it preserves of ideals and customs which were cherished by former generations. Epitaphs and mortuary symbols are commentaries on the progress of mankind. In them may be traced the history of religious beliefs, and in them may be read accounts of what other ages considered great and noble. An inscription may be as valuable to the student as a priestly code or creed; and a pyramid, cenotaph, or cinerary urn may throw as much light on extinct civilizations as the more direct testimony of papyrus and vellum. From the prehistoric cemeteries of the Viminal and Esquiline hills the antiquary has derived information which enables him to identify the earliest settlers of Rome with the peoples of Etruria and Magna Græcia. Also from the rows of tombs which border the Via Appia, the Via Latina, the Salaria and Nomentana, he has learned much of the pursuits, hopes, ambitions, and habits which prevailed before the Christian era. Something of the religious spirit of those remote days may be gathered from epitaphs which yet survive. Thus, a young widow has carved on the monument to her beloved these startling sentences: "To the adorable, blessed soul of L. Sempronius Firmus. We knew, we loved each other from childhood; married, an impious hand separated us at once. Oh, *infernal gods*, do be kind and merciful to him, and let him appear to me in the silent hours of the night." A mother has hewn on the face of a sarcophagus these affecting words: "Oh, miserable mother, who hast seen the most cruel end of thy children! *If God had been merciful*, thou hadst been buried by them." Somewhat revengeful the imprecations which also appear, as when one dead man is represented as crying from his resting place: "Whoever steals the nails from this structure, may he thrust them into his eyes;" and unhappily spiteful the entreaty on a gravestone in the Vigna Codini: "Lawyers and the evil-eyed keep away from my tomb."¹ On the marble coffin of Julia Prisca Secunda is inscribed the remarkable tribute: "She committed no fault, except to die."

Frederika Bremer, having examined the memorials to the dead along the famous Appian Way, extending over the Roman Campagna, declares that their manifold tributes "bear witness to the grief of the living for the dead, but never the hope of reunion." But while much of the past has been learned from these sources, were it possible to restore the thousands of ruined tombs which environ the "eternal city," and fully decipher their almost illegible characters, it would be a comparatively easy task to revive the old Roman world in the essentials of its thought and activity.

¹ Lanciani, "Pagan and Christian Rome," pp. 254-263; or Lanciani, "Ancient Rome," chap. iii, p. 67.

In a similar manner and from similar material can the primitive Church, especially as a suffering and martyr-body, be reproduced and rehabilitated. Such material has been furnished by the Catacombs. To the Christian no other asylum of the dead equals in pathetic interest these ancient labyrinthine passages where the persecuted saints sought an altar and a grave. Jerome, writing about the middle of the fourth century, describes them as they were in his day, saying that he "was accustomed, as a youth, when studying in Rome, to visit these dark and dreary spots on Sundays, in order to see the tombs of apostles and martyrs, and often to enter the crypts, which are dry, in the depths of the earth, where the walls on each side of the visitors are lined with bodies of the dead, and all is so dark as to seem almost to fulfill the prophecy, 'They go down alive into hell'; for the light being admitted at few intervals from above, and then not by a window, but a hole, renders the darkness horrible, and, in advancing cautiously, surrounded by dark night, the line of Vergil occurs to the mind:

'Horror ubi animos simul ipsa silentia terrent.'"¹

Some uncertainty attaches to the origin of these gloomy galleries. It has been held, and with show of truth, that the excavations were first formed by quarrying the volcanic sandy rock for the purpose of supplying stone for the erection of buildings, and afterward increased in order to procure sand for cement. They are mentioned by various Latin authors, as Horace, Varro, Cicero, and Suetonius. It is supposed that originally the bodies of infants, whose parents were too poor to pay for their cremation, were interred there. In a part of these subterranean retreats the early Christians deposited their dead. This is hardly called in question. It is stated by some authorities that as the "Arenarii," or sand-diggers, were among the poorer orders of the people, it is not unlikely that Christianity made many converts among them, as it usually did among the needy, and that, in imitation of Christ's burial in a tomb, they would naturally prepare cave-like vaults for the reception of their dead. It is certain that the disciples of the first centuries departed from cremation, adopted inhumation, and expressed their view of death and the hope of the resurrection by giving to the localities where the remains of loved ones were committed to the earth the soft, sweet name of *cæmeteria*, "sleeping-places." It should be borne in mind, in this connection, that the term "catacomb" has no relation whatever to sepulture; for it simply denotes in the Greek, whence it was derived, a "hollow," and was given, on account of the configuration of the ground, to a particular locality in the neighborhood of Rome. In the course of time, as artificial "hollows" were used as burial places, these receptacles came to be known as *cæmeteria ad catacumbas*, or, for short, merely as *catacumbæ*. Not a few notable scholars challenge the opinion that these retreats were at the beginning quarries furnishing Rome with building material. On this point write Northcote and Brownlow: "It has always been agreed among men of learning who have had an opportunity of examining these excavations, that they were used exclusively by the Christians as places of burial and of holding religious assemblies. Modern research has now placed it beyond a doubt that they were also originally designed for this purpose and for no other; that they were not deserted sand-pits (*arenariæ*) or quarries, adapted to Christian uses, but a development, with important modifications, of a form of sepulcher not altogether unknown even among the heathen families of Rome, and in common use among the Jews, both in Rome and elsewhere."²

I am not convinced that doubt has entirely ceased on this interesting subject; but it is not sufficiently important to call for a balancing of evidence in these pages. The one fact, concerning which there is practically no controversy, is all that appeals to the reader. The

¹ See Maitland, "Church in the Catacombs."

"All things are full of horror and affright

And dreadful even the silence of the night."—"Dryden's Vergil," *Æneid*, 1.

² "*Roma Sotterranea*."

early Christians did choose these tortuous subterranean galleries for their dead, or fashioned them with their own hands from the start, that they might serve as enduring tombs. It is not, however, to be concluded that this preference for underground cemeteries was at the beginning due to fear.¹ The Roman government acknowledged the inviolability of grave and mausoleum. It did not war on the charnel house. Whether the deceased was good or bad, pagan or Nazarene, his right to undisturbed repose was recognized. By the force of existing laws the cemeteries of the Church were sacred. For a time, therefore, the disciples interred above ground, and gave no signs of a sense of insecurity. But with the persecution of Domitian (95 A. D.) they withdrew as far as possible from publicity. Then they penetrated the bowels of the earth and in the thick darkness sought protection, haunted by the vague fear that even the last refuges allotted to the dead might be outraged by the lawlessness of the mob. It is more than likely that these dark chambers also afforded an occasional asylum to the living. When the authorities were proscribing the faithful, here they could find a temporary resting place, and often, along narrow ways unknown to government officials, an avenue of escape. But we are not to suppose that the existence of the Catacombs was altogether successfully concealed from the representatives of the State. We have accounts of descents made by officers of the law during the persecutions of Valerian and Diocletian on fugitives who had fled to these underground mazes. But while some of the Catacombs were unquestionably known to the authorities, it is probable that others were securely hidden, and that there were also roads winding in such confusion and leading to such depths as to be perilous to the uninitiated. Detectives would pause before venturing into this seemingly endless wilderness, and soldiers, accustomed to ply their vocation in the open air, would not be anxious to go very far in the inextricable tangle of ways in places heavy with the atmosphere of the charnel house. But what would prove, or might prove, destructive to the stranger, would naturally be a means of safety to those who knew how to thread their path through the labyrinth, where to find springs of water and breathing holes, and the larger rooms where occasionally groups met for worship. In times of comparative rest the saints would frequent these retreats and become familiar with their secrets, and probably would hold religious services there; convene there, also, for counsel, and there arrange for missionary expeditions and other forms of Christian work; and when anew the savage cry: "To the lions!" broke on their ear, and carried momentary terror to the hearts of maid and mother, would withdraw deeper into the darkness and thus in measure avoid the tempest it was impossible to avert. In other words, Lord Lindsay's description, pathetic and impressive, must have had a counterpart in reality: "All this while there was living beneath the visible an invisible Rome—a population unheeded, unreckoned—thought of vaguely, vaguely spoken of, and with the familiarity and indifference that men feel who live on a volcano—yet a population strong-hearted, of quick impulses, nerved alike to suffer or to die, and in number, resolution, and physical force sufficient to have hurled their oppressors from the throne of the world, had they not deemed it their duty to kiss the rod, to love their enemies, to bless those that cursed them, and to submit, for their Redeemer's sake, to 'the powers that be.' Here in these 'dens and caves of the earth' they lived; here they died—a 'spectacle' in their life-time 'to men and angels,' and in their death a 'triumph' to mankind—a triumph of which the echoes still float around the walls of Rome, and over the desolate Campagna, while those that once thrilled the capitol are silenced, and the walls that returned them have long since crumbled into dust."²

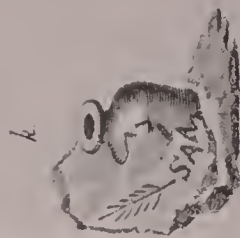
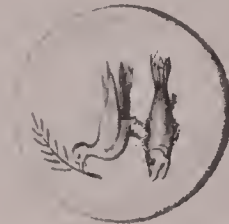
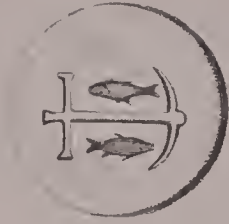
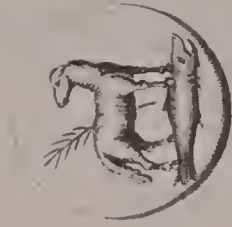
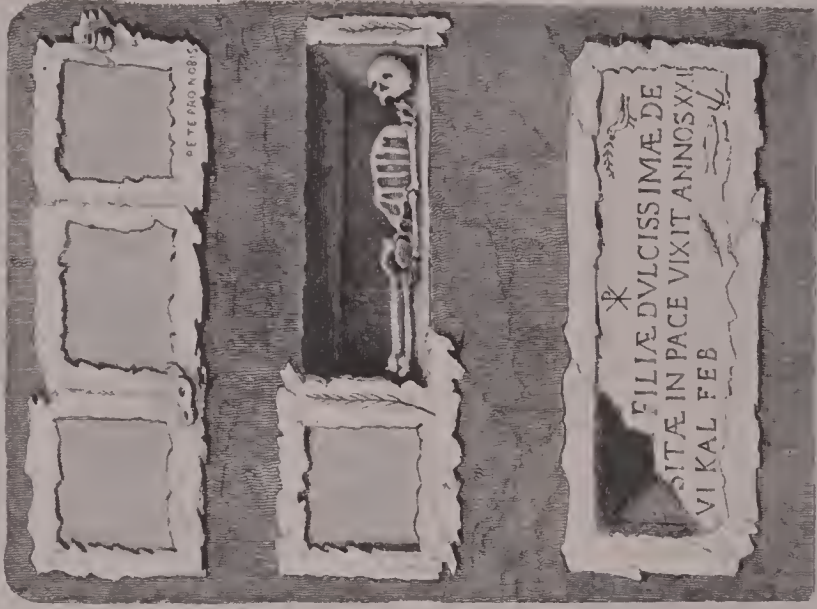
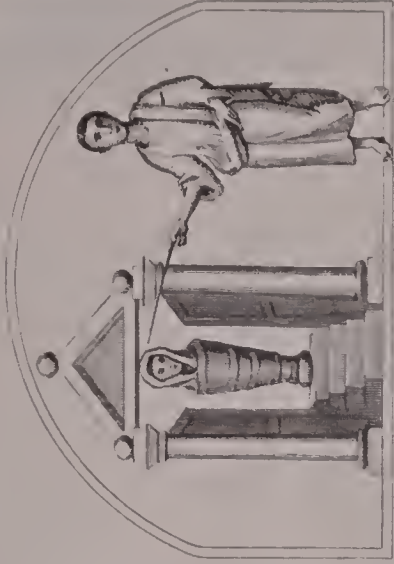
Mommsen dwells with considerable emphasis on "the enormous space occupied by the burial vaults of Christian Rome, not surpassed even by the *cloacæ* or sewers of Republican Rome";³ and various explorers have tried to fix with something like approximate exactness

¹ See Lanciani, "Pagan and Christian Rome," chap. vii.

² "Christian Art," I, p. 4.

³ "Contemporary Review," May, 1871.

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SYMBOLS FROM THE CATACOMBS.

their dimensions. Padre Marchi estimates the total length of the galleries to be from 800 to 900 miles, and the population of the dead at 6,000,000 or 7,000,000.¹ These figures are startling. They are larger, however, than Northcote thinks the circumstances warrant. Michele Stefano de' Rossi occupies a middle ground and calculates the aggregate length of the galleries at 587 geographical miles, with a little short of 2,000,000 of *loculi* for the remains of the saints. But if we are to construe "*ingens multitudo*" (a vast multitude) of Tacitus as Rawlinson² would have us, and consequently, with the "Edinburg Review,"³ believe that in the age of Valerian the Christians were reckoned at one-half of the population of Rome, then the weight of evidence is rather on the side of Marchi's estimate than on that of de' Rossi. While we are naturally interested in the vast extent of these subterranean burial grounds, we are really more directly concerned with their wonderful contents. Perhaps I ought to say, "with what they did contain"; for many of their treasures have been removed.

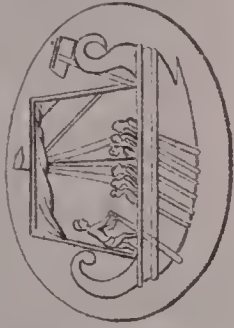
It was May 31, 1578, that a workman employed in the vineyard of Bartolomeo Sanchez, discovered a Christian cemetery, rich in frescoes, sarcophagi, and inscriptions. Many leading men of the age, among them Cardinal Baronius, investigated the spot and were deeply impressed by what they saw—"the network of galleries crossing one another at various angles, the skylights, the wells, the symmetry of the *cubiculi* and *arcosolia*, and the number of *loculi* with which the sides of the galleries were honeycombed."

It appears that, from the ninth century to the sixteenth, the very existence of the Catacombs had been lost sight of. Generations had swept across the sleeping places of the early saints little dreaming that they were treading on hallowed ground. Then came the day of discovery, which brought to light memorials of primitive Christianity, and laid the foundations of Christian archæology. But all of these memorials were not permitted to remain where originally found. With successive explorations the tombs and chapels have been largely despoiled. Museums, villas, churches, and monasteries have been adorned at the expense of the dead. Precious medallions, engraved stones, jewels, and other curios have been purloined from altar and grave, and are proudly exhibited in the Vatican and in other celebrated collections of antiquities. Moreover, in the course of this wholesale pillage, numerous frescoes have been ruined by the hands that were seeking to remove them, as in the case of some beautiful pictures that had ornamented the crypt of the Flavian family. Concerning the widespread destruction of these mortuary treasures, Lanciani inquires: "Who were responsible for this wholesale pillage?" And he answers: "The very men — Aringhi, Boldetti, Marangoni, Bottari — who devoted their lives, energies, and talents to the study of the Catacombs. . . . Such was the spirit of the age. Whether an historical inscription came out of one cemetery or another did not matter to them; the topographical importance of discoveries was not appreciated. Written or engrossed memorials were sought, not for the sake of the history of the place to which they belonged, but to ornament houses. . . . Tombstones were removed . . . to St. Maria in Trastevere, and inserted in the floor of the nave. Benedict XIV. took away the best and placed them in the Vatican library." Therefore the Catacombs of to-day are only mutilated Catacombs, impoverished and disfigured; and though their testimony is still solemn and impressive, we ought to try and think of them as they were before they were ransacked and outraged by archæological vandals. It is also impossible to exactly compute how much has perished by the natural ravages of time, in addition to what has been deported from these subterranean vaults. Doubtless decay has wrought its share of ruin. We may, however, form a proximate idea of the extent to which the Catacombs have suffered by meditating on what Northcote has written regarding the loss of early Christian memorials in general: "Of Christian inscriptions in Rome during the first six centuries, de' Rossi has studied more than

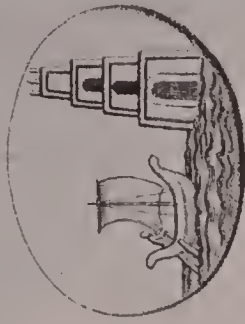
¹ "*Monumenti della Arti Christiane Primitive.*"

² "Historical Evidences," p. 218.

³ "Review," No. 221, p. 106.



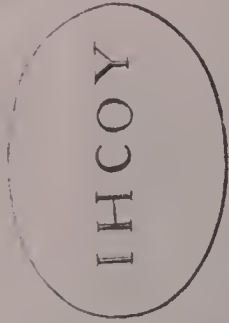
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SYMBOLISM.

15,000, the immense majority of which were taken from the Catacombs, and he tells us there is still an average yearly addition of about 500 derived from the same source. This number, vast as it is, is but a poor remnant of what once existed. From the collections made in the eighth and ninth centuries it appears that there were once at least 170 ancient Christian inscriptions in Rome, which had an historical or monumental character; written generally in meter, and to be seen at that time in the places which they were intended to illustrate. Of these only twenty-six remain, either whole or in parts. In the Roman topographies of the seventh century 140 sepulchers of famous martyrs and confessors are enumerated; we have recovered only twenty inscribed memorials to assist us in the identification of these. Only nine epitaphs have come to light belonging to the bishops of Rome during the same six centuries; and yet during that period there were certainly buried in the suburbs of the city upward of sixty. Thus, whatever facts we take as the basis of our calculation it would seem that scarcely a seventh part of the original wealth of the Roman Church in memorials of this kind has survived the wreck of ages; and de' Rossi gives it as his opinion that there were once more than 100,000 of them."¹

But, though the Catacombs have shared in this melancholy desolation, and have been stripped almost to bankruptcy of their possessions, still in their dilapidation they speak in no uncertain terms of the beliefs, hopes, and trials of God's people. "The doctrine of the resurrection is implied or expressed on almost every tombstone which has been discovered. The Christian is not dead—he 'rests' or 'sleeps'—he is not buried, but '*deposited*' in his grave, and he is always 'at peace.' The survivors do not mourn his loss despairingly, but express trust, resignation or moderate grief."²

These underground cemeteries are rich in symbols. The anchor, expressive of hope, is common. There also frequently occurs the dove, emblem of the soul freed from its earthly prison; the sheep, ever the pathetic sign of guilty man wandering in the deserts of sinful life; and the fish, typical of our Lord himself, as the letters which compose the word in the Greek are the initials of his descriptive title, "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior." Then there are representations of a ship, alluding to the Church; also of the vine, the olive, the palm, emblems of truth, peace, and victory. Sometimes there is drawn the figure of a woman kneeling, referring again to the bride of Christ as suppliant. The cross appears, though not the crucifix, and occasionally the image of a loaf, doubtless recalling the miracle of the loaves, and possibly disclosing the great thought that Christ is the Bread of Life. Repeatedly the crown is made prominent on the walls of the galleries, and it may truly be said that throughout these dreary abodes of death an atmosphere of victory prevails. The favorite theme seems to have been Christ as the good shepherd. "We cannot go through any part of the Catacombs, or turn over any collection of ancient Christian monuments, without coming across it again and again. We know from Tertullian that it was often designed upon chalices. We find it ourselves painted in fresco upon the roof and walls of the sepulchral chambers; rudely scratched upon gravestones, or more carefully sculptured on sarcophagi; traced in gold upon glass, molded on lamps, engrossed on rings; and, in a word, represented on every species of Christian monument that has come down to us."³ According to Lord Lindsay, "He [Christ] is represented as a youth in a shepherd's frock and sandals, carrying the lost sheep on his shoulders, or leaning on his staff (the symbol, according to Saint Augustine, of the Christian hierarchy), while the sheep feed around or look up at him. Sometimes he is represented seated in the midst of the flock, playing on a shepherd's pipe—in a few instances, in the oldest Catacombs, he is introduced in the character of Orpheus, surrounded by wild beasts enrapt by the melody of his lyre—Orpheus being then supposed to have been a prophet or precursor of the Messiah."⁴

¹ "Epitaphs," p. 3.

² Rawlinson, "Historical Evidences," p. 220.

³ See "*Roma Sotterranea*."

⁴ "Christian Art."

It surely need hardly be said that all these conceptions are thoroughly evangelical. They comprehend within their scope the entire scheme of Christian doctrine. Clearly they indicate that to the Church in the Catacombs Christianity was more than a moral scheme or rule, and was essentially a redemption. They reveal Jesus likewise, not as another Buddha,

“ All honored, wisest, best, most pitiful,
The teacher of Nirvana and the law ;”

but as the sin-bearer, seeking the lost, imparting peace to the conscience, and bringing all believers through the glorious resurrection to endless victory. The baptistery of Saint Pontianus, far underground, with its deep pool, and method of supplying abundant water, in its turn bears testimony to the prevailing conviction that our Lord had risen from the dead, and that they who profess his name should be themselves already delivered from spiritual death. While the wreaths and crowns of roses “ hanging from the bills of mystic doves ” engraved on stones, and these and other flowers painted on the walls, with the birds that are depicted in the frescoes that adorn the Catacomb of Callixtus, and the custom of decorating martyr tombs with violets, amaranths, and evergreens, impart to the struggling faith the characteristics of brotherly sympathy and compassion, they equally point to a life beyond, where the soul, symbolized by the bird, shall be freed from its cage and given its blessed liberty in the Paradise of God. Pictures on Biblical themes also confirm the impression made by Christian epigraph and emblem. The fall is portrayed, and in the conventional treatment of the subject our Lord is introduced as condemning Adam and Eve, and offering for them a lamb. Then the leading events of sacred history are sketched—the offering of Cain and Abel, the flood and the ark, the sacrifice of Isaac, the passage of the Red Sea, the gift of the Law to Moses, the smiting of the rock, the ascent of Elijah, the sufferings of the Hebrew children in Babylon, and the varied experiences of Jonah, the latter theme being dwelt on as though the artists discerned a distinct resemblance between heathen Rome and ancient Nineveh. The various scenes in the life of Christ, from the nativity on through the most striking incidents of miracle and teaching, until he stands before Pilate, are faithfully drawn by the pencil of believers. Evidently to the frequenters of the Catacombs these works were not mere representations of fictions. These people were not sentimentalists and dreamers. To them religion was a stern reality. They lived hourly in expectation of death, and were not likely to indulge in idle flights of fancy. They wrote their confession of faith with chisel and hammer, and outlined their creed with brush and pencil. This was to them a very serious matter. They had no time for the invention of mythological stories for the purpose of conveying truth. They simply sought to perpetuate the truth of historical stories. Their symbols, inscriptions, and paintings were only a method of recording the things that were most surely believed among them. Hence the Catacombs are to this day an illuminated commentary on the Gospels. Whosoever studies their testimony can hardly resist the conclusion that the evangelists taught no mere philosophy of naturalism; and that the early Church held clearly and distinctly to those central doctrines which are the logical outcome of the supernatural events which they described and to which they bore witness.

Eloquent as the Catacombs are on this theme they are even more so on another; one, too, that appeals to our admiration of the conscientious and heroic in human conduct. The word martyr, frequently occurs on their tombs, and, when absent, something in the inscription often shows that the deceased was the victim of persecution. Although the phials found in some of the burial places, and once supposed to contain the sediment of blood, may only have held the dregs of wine used in the feasts of love, they still afford proof that the worshipers were not permitted to convene in the light, and were driven by tyranny to celebrate their mysteries in concealment. Among the sepulchral remains which the Vatican has appropriated from the Catacombs is the following, brought to light in the cemetery of Callixtus, and illustrative of the

entire martyr period. The language relates to the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and to his harsh proceedings against the Church :

“IN CHRIST.

Alexander is not dead, but lives beyond the stars, and his body rests in this tomb. He lived under the Emperor Antoninus, who, foreseeing that great benefit would result from his services, returned evil for good. For, while on his knees and about to sacrifice to the true God, he was led away to execution. O sad times ! in which sacred rites and prayers, even in caverns, afford no protection to us. What can be more wretched than such a life, and what than such a death ? When they could not be buried by their friends and relations, at length they are resplendent in heaven. He has scarcely lived who has lived in Christian times.”¹

Maitland writes : “ A number of circumstances in this inscription are worthy of notice ; the beginning, in which the first two words (*Alexander mortuus*), after leading us to expect a lamentation, break out into an assurance of glory and immortality ; the description of the temporal insecurity in which the believers of that time lived ; the difficulty of procuring Christian burial for the martyrs ; the certainty of their heavenly reward ; and, lastly, the concluding sentence, forcibly recalling the words of Saint Paul, ‘ as dying, yet behold we live,’ and again, ‘ I die daily.’ ” The picture is indeed vivid, not only in what it states, but in what it implies as well ; the constant anxiety of the saints, the apprehension of betrayal by some informer, the uneasiness and suspicion created by spies, the alarm lest outrages against honor as well as against life should be inflicted on maids and matrons, and the awful suspense regarding the events of each returning day. As we read the inscription anew we behold the Christian, a proscribed man, subject to manifold indignities at the hand of heathen neighbors, liable at any moment to be torn from his family, having no right of appeal, confronting only the alternative of sacrifice to the effigy of the emperor or death, robbed, maltreated, scorned, misrepresented, scourged, and cast like carrion to the lions. Wonderful the fortitude and endurance of these saints of God who were “ stoned,” “ were sawn asunder,” “ were tempted,” and were “ slain by the sword ! ” And what is equally amazing is their triumphant mood. It is manifest in the writing on Alexander’s tomb, and is one of the most distinctive features of the martyr’s history. The song which is recorded in the “ Paraclesis ” of Basil may doubtless be taken as a sample of the exalted thoughts, the defiant temper, and the glorious expectations of the men and women who counted not their lives dear unto death. He represents the forty martyrs, who were exposed naked to the frost the night before they were to be burned, as singing : “ Sharp is the winter, but sweet is paradise : painful is the frost, but sweet is the fruit that follows it. We wait for a little, and the Patriarch’s bosom shall cherish us : after one night we shall lay hold on eternal life. Our feet shall feel the fire for a season, but we shall walk arm in arm with angels ; our hands shall falloff here, that they may be lifted up forever to the praise of the Almighty.” Similar, also, the magnificent address of Tertullian to his fellow-sufferers in the “ days of darkness,” in which he sets forth the superiority of God’s children to dungeons and tortures, and discloses the secret of their inward peace.

“ Let us,” he says, “ change the name of prison and call it a retreat. Although the body be inclosed, although the flesh be detained, all places are open to spirit. Wander, then, in spirit, not proposing to yourself shaded woods or long porticoes, but the way which leads to God. As often as you walk thus in spirit, you will escape from prison. The limb feels nothing in the nerve, when the mind is in heaven. The mind carries with it the whole man, and removes it to wherever it wishes.” That is, Joanna Baillie being the interpreter,

“ I am so pleased to die and am so honored
In dying for the pure and holy truth
That nature’s instinct seems in me extinguished.”

¹ Maitland, “ Church in the Catacombs,” pp. 32, 33.



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CHRIST AND HIS SAINTS.

Sublime self-illusion! noble self-oblivion! lofty enthusiasm! No wonder that the memorials which perpetuate their triumphs are counted most precious, and are sacredly treasured by all who venerate the God-like in man.

There is much of a melancholy monotony in the tributes inscribed by admiring love on the martyr's tombs. As for substance, they are practically the same. Difference as to date, as to age and sex, and then almost identical phraseology in describing the holy deed and its reward. It is not, therefore, necessary to multiply copies of epitaphs; for those we have referred to may be taken as samples of thousands we have not transcribed. But the great subject to which they relate, and which acquires a stronger hold on the devout imagination because it is so intimately allied to the history of the Catacombs, is of sufficient moment to call for further and more serious attention, and, indeed, cannot be slighted if one would faithfully reproduce the age in which Christianity attained its first development. It is not easy to explain why persecution should have been tolerated by the Almighty. The motives of men in destroying those who differ from them in religious belief are not hard to find. But why God should permit them to pursue their cruel way is not as apparent. That he leaves them to work out their malicious tyranny may be inferred from the fact that he did not restrain the men who "with wicked hands" crucified his Son. We may, however, at this point remember that his Son was delivered into their power by his "determinate counsel and foreknowledge." That is, in the wondrous passion there are two distinct agencies, the human and the divine. The Father does not check by his omnipotence the savage outbreak against his Son, because he ordained from the beginning that only through sufferings should he be made perfect, and only by suffering secure the justification of the ungodly.¹ May there not have been an application of this same principle to the early Church? May it not have been that the dross might be purged away, that her growth might not exhaust itself in leaves, and that her virtues might not become commonplace, that the oppressor was left to work for a season unhindered his barbarous hatred? By agony and stress of struggle all things good and beautiful have been wrought out in the natural world; and to-day, as in the past, war, tempest, the very "groaning of creation," are necessary to physical perpetuity and progress.

"Behold this vine!
I found it a wild tree, whose wanton strength
Had swol'n into irregular twigs
And bold excrescences,
And spent itself in leaves and little rings;
So in the flourish of its wantonness
Wasting the sap and strength
That should have given forth fruit;
But when I pruned the plant
Of useless leaves, and knotted as thou sees't,
Into those full clear clusters, to repay
The hand that wisely wounded it."²

The Church, likewise, is a vine. When planted in the soil of the Roman world and exposed to the hot-house atmosphere of iniquity, was there no danger of unguided energies taking shape in erroneous speculations and unwarranted divisions? And if so, why not the sharp pruning knife? "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth"; and his people have continually been chosen in the furnace of affliction, and have been taught to glorify God in the fires. It is not surprising, then, that he should have dealt with the Bride as with the Bridegroom, and for the same reason. As the Bridegroom was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and was by wicked hands taken and crucified and slain;³ so the Bride was delivered by his eternal purpose to the

¹ Hebrews ii, 10, v, 9; I. Peter iii, 18.

² Southey.

³ Acts ii, 23; Hebrews xii, 6-11.



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THE CHURCH AND HER FOES.

bloody persecutor, not that she might be slain, but that all false ambition, lawless desire, and worldly lust might be slain in her.

May not persecution also have served in God's providence as a fierce parable, teaching that only through suffering could the Church attain unto perfection. That there is a struggle at the heart of progress cannot be denied, whether or not it conditions the survival of the fittest, and that its groaning becomes more articulate as we rise to the vast human world, finding its climax in the spiritual, is equally manifest. Whatever conflicts may have preceded man's appearance on this planet, we know that since his coming he has developed at terrible cost. Stains of blood redden not only the highway of religion, but the track of civilization. Masses of victims lie crushed beneath its wheels, and at the shrine of every improvement millions of lives are offered up in sacrifice. To establish the empires of Nimrod, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, and Cæsar, and to inaugurate the epochs which these names suggest, untold numbers of our race had to succumb to the conquering factions. Then, and ever since, cities burned, provinces wasted, fertile regions made over to desolation, and people surrendered to unutterable horrors of cruelty, have made the onward march of humanity sadder than a battlefield strewn with slaughter and infested with ravening wolves and jackals. Even in our own times the triumphs of civilization mean the withering of tribes before the vices of their leaders. While we claim to be living in an era of generousness, we encounter ranks or classes whose fingers are worn to the bone, whose hearts are strained to breaking by the fierceness of competition and the selfishness of commerce. The benign ministry of our mechanical and mercantile age has something savage in it, and writes its record on the faces of human millions who, too weak for strife, fall out of the ranks, stagger awhile painfully in the rear, and then drop down in heartbroken despair.

In every department of society we find the same contest. The battle extends to theories, systems, religions, and what is apparently inevitable, these theories, systems, and religions only influence the world by conquering in the battle. Ideas array themselves in antagonism as well as men, and there is no peace anywhere under the sun. Parties, sects, philosophies, creeds, seek to exterminate each other, and the air is agitated with the cries of hostile factions. From all this we are forced to believe that the Divine Being accomplishes his purposes, not only in the physical but in the moral world, by means of infinite travail, and by rendering the anguish of souls tributary to the ultimate peace of the universe. All things below the stars are groaningly full of expectation. We must accept these inarticulate moanings, these expressive wailings, as the signs of a progress in which tears shall be transmuted into joys, pangs into glories, death into life, the din of battle into the victorious triumph, and the wilderness of earth into the kingdom of God. Unless the Church realize this, not unnaturally she will abandon herself to ease and luxury, and, falling below her great mission, prove, at best, to be but a cumberer of the ground. When she has forgotten the lesson of persecution, when she has failed to realize the necessity for conflict even unto death, and has clothed herself in royal apparel and feasted delicately, she has speedily felt the sting of other scourges than those wielded by the officers of despotic government, and been compelled to pass through agonies as intense as those endured by martyrs in the Roman amphitheater. But alas! at such times she has known something of the martyr's anguish without experiencing his sense of triumph, or attaining to the martyr's palm.

As she looks over the records of the Catacombs, the Church in our day should realize that she is under the same law which prevails throughout the entire universe of God: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."¹

¹ Romans viii, 22, 23 (Revised Version).

CHAPTER VII.

THE TIMES OF TERROR.

THE first terrific outbreak against the Christians beyond the borders of Palestine occurred, as we have seen, under the reign of Nero. We are not, however, to infer from this circumstance that all persecutions were of imperial instigation. They were frequently incited by the clamor of the people, the contentions of the philosophers, and the calumnies of the priests. Not only was the common rabble "exceedingly mad" against the new creed, but citizens of a better class, though neither affluent nor refined, were doggedly opposed to what they regarded as a detestable fanaticism, injurious alike to commerce and happiness. Sophists and rhetoricians, having very little faith left in their own gods, were intolerant, as is not unusual in such cases, toward those who had the temerity to affirm confidently what they had declared to be unbelievable. And, as for the priests, they were moved by self-interest and the prejudices of their vocation to oppose the progress of a religion whose aims and spirit were beyond their comprehension.

Public opinion was set against Christianity. The whole drift of thought and sentiment in pagan civilization ran entirely counter to its teachings and institutions. Its representatives were consequently mocked, maltreated, and defamed by the populace in the streets, just as the Salvation Army in our day has been shamefully abused by hooting and howling ruffians. So intense was the popular animosity that it was often impracticable to keep a regular government proscription within the limits of judicial action.

"There is extant a rescript of Hadrian addressed to the proconsul of Asia, in which he condemns a tumultuous rising against the Christians, which had taken place, and insists upon a regular judicial process for the future."¹ The fanatical and pitiless heathen multitudes demanded that these helpless creatures be thrown into prison, be wrenched and crushed by the rack, and their flesh be torn by nails, knives, and hooks; and savage was the yell of delight when some poor victim, unable longer to endure the lacerations of whips, or the stings of insects attracted to his naked body besmeared with honey, extended his hand in token of his readiness to burn a little incense on the idol's altar. Then these men and women of blunted sensibilities gloated over the tortured and writhing form of the unhappy apostate, and abandoned themselves to frantic expressions of joy. From such orgies they would frequently turn away to hunt for "suspects" in town or country; and woe to the saint, whether sister or brother, who should fall into their hands! Mercy they knew not. To strip the prisoner, to force him by exquisite sufferings to shriek, and if possible to blaspheme, and then, perhaps, to leave him half dead on the highway, afforded these wretches indescribable pleasure.

In the martyrdom of Polycarp (156 A. D.) we have a striking illustration of the rancorous enmity of the mob. According to the accounts we have received of this tragedy, the chief pastor of Smyrna when arrested was taken by Herod, the Irenarch, into his chariot, where he and his father Nicetes remonstrated with him for adhering so unfalteringly to his faith, inquiring: "What injury will it do thee to say Lord Cæsar, and to offer sacrifice?" The captive meekly replied: "I cannot do what you ask of me." Incensed by his steadfastness, the officers rudely thrust him from the chariot, wounding him in the shin. Still he walked cheerfully on until he came to the Stadium, where great throngs of turbulent people were gathered. The proconsul formally arraigned him. He asked whether his name was Polycarp, and then urged him to renounce Christ, cry, "Down with the atheists," and offer sacrifice to Cæsar. "Swear, and I release thee; revile the Christ." Then came the memorable answer:

¹ Uhlhorn, "Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism," p. 263.

"Eighty and six years have I served him, and he has never done me a wrong. How can I blaspheme him, my King, who has saved me?" The proconsul was apparently anxious to rescue the bishop, but he could not do so unless in some way he could appease the savage plebs. He, therefore, addressed himself again to the prisoner: "Try to persuade the people."

Polycarp. "I feel bound to give an account of myself to *thee*, for our religion teaches us to give due honor to the powers ordained of God as far as possible. But I hold *these*"—pointing to the clamorous rabble—"unworthy of any reason I might render."

Proconsul. "I have wild beasts ready. Unless thou repentest, I will expose thee to them."

Polycarp. "Let them come! We are not accustomed to repent with that repentance which changes from better to worse. On the contrary, I hold it good to pass from worse to better."

Proconsul. "Since thou despisest beasts, I will cause thee to be consumed by fire, unless thou changest thy mind."

Polycarp. "The fire thou threatenest burns for an hour, and is soon after extinguished. Thou knowest not that penal fire of judgment and punishment which is reserved for the ungodly. But why dost thou delay? Do thy will!"

The magistrate was perplexed by this sublime firmness, and hardly knew how to act. He, however, aroused himself to the discharge of an unpleasant duty, and sent a herald up and down the Stadium to proclaim the fatal fact: "Polycarp has confessed that he is a Christian!" Then arose the strident sound of many voices, crying, "This is the teacher of Asia! This is the father of the Christians! This is the overturner of our gods!" For him the crowd had no thought of mercy. The angry multitude demanded of the Asiarch, as the president of the games, that a lion be loosed upon Polycarp. But when he sought to gain time, and told them that the gladiatorial spectacles were ended, a tumultuous and howling clamor hushed his plea. If lions were not to be had, fire was near at hand. The magistrate, unable to restrain the brutal throng, yielded everything, and the aged saint was speedily surrounded with wood and straw, hurriedly brought by the populace from the shops and baths. When about to be nailed to the stake he asked that he might only be bound: "For he who allows me to undergo the fire will enable me to remain unmoved without your fastenings." Then, with his hands bound behind him, the venerable sufferer offered this final prayer: "Omnipotent Lord God, Father of thy beloved and blessed Son, Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the knowledge of thee; God of angels, and powers, and of all creatures, and of the family of the just who live in thy sight; I bless thee that on this day and hour thou hast counted me worthy to make one of the number of thy martyrs, to partake of the cross of Christ, and to look for the resurrection to eternal life both of soul and body, through the power of the Holy Spirit, praying that I may be received to-day among the number of thy saints, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, according as thou, the true God, hast prepared me by thy forewarnings and their fulfillment. Therefore, for all things, I bless and glorify thee, through the everlasting and heavenly Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son; with whom to thee and the Holy Spirit, be glory, now and through all ages. Amen!"¹

Then the smoke began to enwreath the martyr, and the flames to shoot forth furiously. But as a breath of wind disclosed to the spectators the body still unconsumed, perhaps fearing a miracle of deliverance, the *confectors*, whose business it was to slay unmanageable beasts in the amphitheater, thrust Polycarp through with a sharp instrument. The sparks gleamed anew in the black cloud that enshrouded the martyr, and the fires surged and roared. The people, their deadly task completed, turned away as heartless as ever from the sickening scene, having afforded to all ages another impressive instance of their blindness to their own interests, and their awful blindness to the gracious interposition of heaven in the ministrations of Christianity

¹ Eusebius, "Church History," IV, xv.

on their behalf. Bigoted as priests have been, intolerant and prejudiced as philosophers have often proved, never have they surpassed the mob in corrosive animosity and unreasoning prejudice against movements that have sought by unusual means to deliver mankind from intrenched evils and time-honored tyrannies.

But this bitter dislike was not confined to the populace. It was shared by some of the most enlightened and philosophical minds of the age.¹ And, strange to say, "more clemency was shown toward the followers of Christ by emperors, whom we are accustomed to call tyrants, than by those who are considered models of virtue. The author of the *"Philosophumena"* (Book IX, chap. 11) says that Commodus granted to Pope Victor the liberation of the Christians who had been condemned to the mines of Sardinia by Marcus Aurelius." And yet in his *"Meditations,"* this ruler says that he had learned from Diognetus, probably his tutor, "to endure freedom of speech." It was also in his reign that Felicitas and Justin Martyr suffered death (163 A. D.), the latter being denounced publicly by the philosopher Crescens. Evidently he was not at heart as tolerant as some of his reflections would imply. Neither was Celsus, another philosopher, strongly inclined toward "sweet reasonableness." His writings are full of scorn and fierce invective, which, in the nature of things, must have roused the worst passions of the mob. Lucian travestied martyrdom and parodied miracles, helping on the savage work of extermination by his heartless ridicule. The priests were grateful to their allies, and employed their influence to eradicate every trace of the new religion.

When the Emperor Decius resolved to reform Rome, and to that end insisted that the ancient office of censor should be restored, and the worship of idols be revived, it was comparatively easy for the pagan hierarchy to inflame the zeal of the government against the Christians. A determined and sanguinary effort was made during the third century to reanimate expiring heathenism, and its failure was certainly not due to any sentimental weakness on the part of the sacerdotal orders. The story is told of Diocletian, who was committed to this policy, that in the presence of his court, where there were many Christians employed, he ordered a sacrifice, and directed Tagis, the chief priest, to examine the entrails for signs. The disciples of our Lord crossed themselves to show that they had no part in the superstitious rites, and, as the wished-for omens failed, the priest exclaimed: "The gods refuse to appear at our sacrifice because profane men are present, and hinder the revelation by means of the sign [the cross] which the gods hate." This was enough to rouse the slumbering animosity of Diocletian, and presently a persecution was ordered, which ranks among the most terrible recorded on the pages of history. So pitiless and terrific was this outbreak that to this day the Coptic Churches date from the accession of Diocletian (284 A. D.) the "era of the martyrs."

It would seem, then, from these facts, that the entire land was in arms against the new cult, and that there was a spontaneous outburst of fury against its adherents. Only the Flavian proscription, which decreed that these adherents should be dealt with as common brigands, was satisfactory to the enraged public sentiment; and the only cry that had a soothing effect on the turbulent spirit of the mob—including the priests and philosophers—was "*Christianos ad leones*"!

But while the Roman world, without regard to government, was obviously incensed against the Christian faith, in due course of events the authorities in formal and official manner proceeded against its supporters. They reflected in their action the demands of the majority of citizens. Human nature is not necessarily tolerant, and administrations are not always independent. Theists and atheists are no more inclined to be liberal than prelates. The atheistical party of the French Revolution doomed the clergy to death, and the deistic party, under Robespierre, sent the atheists Clotz and Chaumette to the guillotine. The only safety for freedom of thought and freedom of conscience, in any age and any country, lies in the

¹ Lanciani, "Pagan and Christian Rome," p. 313.

permanent constitutional separation of the State from interference with the untrammelled exercise of mind and worship. As long as the error is held that government is responsible for the belief and religion of the citizen, just so long will coercion in some form be brought to bear against dissidents, and will seriously curtail their liberty and happiness. With the history of thousands of years before our eyes, it were the height of folly to imagine that we can even now intrust our most sacred rights to the generous forbearance of our fellow-beings. Ecclesiastical majorities, if in any way they could subordinate the forces of government to their purposes, would be dangerous to human freedom; for rulers are not always above corruption, and as a general thing protect only those individuals and communities who can protect themselves. Still is it true that to many politicians the voice of the majority is the voice of God; and consequently it is imperative that their hands be securely tied by constitutional law to prevent them from executing what that voice might demand against some unhappy minority, whose religious doctrines might be considered objectionable. But this wisdom the Roman empire had not learned when the events of our narrative were taking place, and in some portions of the globe it is yet unmastered by chiefs and potentates.

With the administration of Trajan the relation of Christianity to the government came first to be considered. By the year 112 A. D. this religion had spread so rapidly in Bithynia that many temples were forsaken, and the sacrificial ritual was to a great extent abandoned. These facts were brought to the attention of Pliny when he assumed authority in the province, and very likely he was shown that commercial interests were being impaired by the decline of the national altars. Charges of various kinds were preferred against the Christians, and investigation followed.

"He proceeded to inquire into the cases individually; and he learned, first of all from those who recanted, and afterward from two deaconesses (who, being slaves, were examined under torture), that the rites of the Christian religion were simple and harmless, that their discipline forbade all crimes, that the worshipers bound themselves by a *sacramentum* to do no wrong, and that the charges commonly brought against them of practicing child-murder, cannibalism, and other hideous offenses at their private meetings, were groundless."¹ This favorable report did not lessen his ardor against the saints. He forbade them to meet as communities, for the emperor condemned "the formation or existence of *sodalitates*." They obeyed in this particular as far as the evening social gathering was concerned, and yet many of their number were punished even with death. But Pliny was unwilling to proceed alone in this matter, and therefore addressed to his imperial master epistles, giving account of his proceedings, and seeking from him further instructions. An answer was received in the following explicit terms:

"You have done perfectly right, my dear Pliny, in the inquiry which you have made concerning Christians. For truly no one general rule can be laid down which will apply itself to all cases. The people must not be sought after. If they are brought before you and convicted, let them be capitally punished; yet with this restriction, that if anyone renounce Christianity and show his sincerity by supplicating our gods, however suspected he may be for the past, he shall obtain pardon for the future, on his repentance. But anonymous libels in no case ought to be attended to, for the precedent would be of the worst sort, and perfectly incongruous to the maxims of government."

And on this "clemency of despotism" Tertullian has left the significant comment: "O sentence necessarily inconsistent! He denies that inquiry should be made concerning them, as if they were innocent, and commands them to be punished, as if they were guilty; he spares them, and is enraged with them; he dissembles, and blames them. Why dost thou lay thyself open to such censures? If thou condemnest, why not inquire? If thou dost not inquire, why dost thou not absolve?"

¹ Ramsay, "Church in the Roman Empire," p. 205.

But still the question remains: Why were the followers of Christ punished by the strong and unflinching arm of the law? Why did Pliny believe such a course legitimate? In his letters he takes for granted that it is right, and only seeks guidance in the application of a fundamental principle of imperial rule. Ramsay explains, that the Christians maintained an extra-imperial unity, and consequently were proscribed on political and not on religious grounds.

"Rome had throughout its career made it a fixed principle to rule by dividing; all subjects must look to Rome alone; none might look toward their neighbors, or enter into any agreement or connection with them. But the Christians looked to a non-Roman unity; they decided on common action independent of Rome; they looked on themselves as Christians first and Roman subjects afterward; and, when Rome refused to accept this secondary allegiance, they ceased to feel themselves Roman subjects at all. When this was the case, it seems idle to look about for reasons why Rome should proscribe the Christians."¹

This view of the case is, I am sure, true enough, but it is not the whole truth. It must not be overlooked that in the empire the prevailing heathen cult was part and parcel of the national life. Creeds that did not antagonize it were amalgamated with it, or were permitted to dwell with it amicably. Friction was avoided as far as possible. But when a religion appeared that challenged the right of all others to exist; that refused to render homage to the emperor as their divine head; that spurned their ceremonies, denounced their ethics and reprobated their customs, it would inevitably come to be condemned on account of what the age would regard as its impiety. And this is just what occurred as Christianity became known to the Roman government. The new faith was hostile to the old. Fellowship was out of the question. The two systems could not abide together in peace. There was hardly anything in common between them. Christianity would not countenance a lie. To her a lie was no more sacred when sanctioned by the altar than when pronounced in the forum. She took her stand against falsity, whether in the abstract or the concrete. Heathenism was the religion of compromise; for it never realized the authority of truth. "Seneca, having recounted in the most derisive terms the absurdities of the popular worship, concludes his enumeration by declaring that the sage will observe all these things, not as pleasing to the divinities, but as commanded by the law; and that he should remember, 'that his worship is due to custom, not to belief.' Epictetus, whose austere creed rises to the purest monotheism, teaches it as a fundamental religious maxim, that every man in his devotions should conform to the customs of his country. The Jews and Christians, who alone refused to do this, were the representatives of a moral principle that was unknown to the pagan world."²

Yes; for Christianity from the start has never been the religion of expediency, for to her, error, whether countenanced by herself or by others, is a deadly thing. Hence the conflict between the old and the new. To Christianity heathenism was altogether devilish; to heathenism Christianity was thoroughly impious. Consequently, the test by which her members were constantly judged was ultimately a religious one. They were called on to execrate THE NAME, to offer incense to the genius of the emperor, and to sacrifice to the gods. Their examination before the magistrates was not conducted so as to ascertain whether they paid taxes, obeyed ordinances, and avoided conspiracies against the commonwealth. It is, therefore, not sufficiently accurate to say that they were proscribed purely on political, and not at all on religious grounds. As the then existing order of worship was a State institution, non-compliance with which was constructive treason, and as such was bound to be punished, it may be conceded that political considerations influenced persecution. But when it is remembered that the faith of the martyrs was ever made the subject of judicial inquiry, it is surely evasive to claim that persecution was not inspired by religious rivalries and antagonisms.

¹ Ramsay, p. : 56.

² Lecky, "History of Morals," Vol. I, p. 230.

How any other view than this can be held by those who are familiar with the annals of martyrdom is almost beyond comprehension. For instance, the account that has descended to us of the last days of Ignatius confirms and illustrates this position.

When Trajan, under whom proceedings against the saints assumed a more legal form, visited Antioch, Ignatius, then distinguished by the name of Theophorus —“God-bearer”—one who has God in his heart, answering to the Greek word, “Christopher”—presented himself that by his own self-sacrifice he might save his flock from the wrath of the emperor. Being introduced to Trajan, that ruler said:¹

“Who art thou, wicked demon, who art so precipitate and hasty in transgressing our orders, and persuadest others also to perish miserably?”

Ignatius. “None can call Theophorus a wicked demon, for demons have widely departed from the service of God. But if you so call me because I am an enemy to demons, I confess the charge. For, holding Christ to be the heavenly King, I dissolve their enchantments.”

Trajan. “And who is Theophorus?”

Ignatius. “He who has Christ in his heart.”

Trajan. “Dost thou not think then that we have the gods in our minds when we use them as allies against our enemies?”

Ignatius. “Thou errest in calling the heathen demons gods; for there is one God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and one Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, whose kingdom may I obtain.

Trajan. “Dost thou speak of him who was crucified before Pontius Pilate?”

Ignatius. “I speak of him who bore my sin on the cross with its author, and, condemning all the errors of demons and all wickedness, put them under the feet of those who carry him in their heart.”

Trajan. “Dost thou, then, bear the crucified within thyself?”

Ignatius. “I do; for it is written, ‘I will dwell in them and walk in them.’”

Trajan. “Since Ignatius has declared that he bears the crucified in himself, we order that he shall be carried bound by soldiers to great Rome, to be food for beasts and a spectacle for the people.

Ignatius. “I thank thee, Lord, that thou countest me worthy to honor thee in perfect love to thee, and hast thrown me in iron chains like thine Apostle Paul.”

If the traditional account of what further followed may be believed, the condemned, being brought into the great Flavian Amphitheater or Colosseum, before the lions were loosed on him, thus addressed the assembled multitudes:

“Romans, spectators of this present scene, I am not here because of any crime, nor to absolve myself from any charge of wickedness, but to follow God; by the love of whom I am impelled, and whom I long for irrepressibly. For I am his wheat, and must be ground by the teeth of beasts, that I may become his pure bread.”

Manifestly the political element is scarcely, if at all, discernible in this graphic story of martyrdom. I do not say that it is entirely absent; only that it has no perceptible place in the narrative. And my contention simply is, that the religious movement—as a religion—must be taken principally into account when inquiring into the causes of persecution. The religion of the Christians wounded the prejudices of heathenism, and attacked its cherished convictions and customs fearlessly. It was willing to sacrifice earthly prospects to heavenly principles, and was unwilling to be limited in its scope, or to be isolated from any human interest. Therefore, while secret organizations, spreading rapidly and mysteriously throughout the land roused the suspicion and ire of the government, the strange creed held by these societies so widely,

¹ Hefele's Pat. Apos. Op. Prolegom; Smith & Wace, “Dictionary of Christian Biography,” article on Ignatius, Vol. III, pp. 209-222.

separated from the national cult, was also potent in determining official action against their existence. Dr. Plummer says truly: "The toleration of the Romans had tightly drawn limits. Cicero had laid it down as an axiom that no man may have private gods of his own, or adopt fresh ones until they have been officially recognized; and Mæcenâs is represented as advising Augustus to worship the gods according to the laws, and *compel others to do the same*—not merely out of respect to the gods, but because those who introduce new deities may go on to introduce new laws. The Christians, therefore, committed a double offense—they induced citizens to abandon the rites prescribed by law, and they introduced rites not sanctioned by law. Theirs was not a *religio licita*. As they were repeatedly told, *Non licet esse vos*—'You have no right to exist.'"¹

It has not been uncommon of late for a certain class of writers to underestimate the extent and severity of the persecutions under the empire. The school of thought that eulogizes pagan toleration, and serenely and loftily ignores all testimony to the contrary, not illogically tries to show that the number of martyrs has been greatly exaggerated, and the accounts of their sufferings unwarrantably colored. These apologists would have us believe that the Roman people were too broad-minded and liberal to press extreme and cruel measures against any company of worshipers; and that, while occasionally they may have indulged in some slight outbreaks of violence, they were far from being guilty of the sustained and inhuman attacks on the followers of Christ attributed to them by Eusebius and Lactantius. These representations are not trustworthy. While it is not possible to defend at all points the accuracy of Eusebius or Lactantius, the euphemistic arguments of Dodwell and Gibbon will not bear the test of scrutiny. They are elegant and eloquent, but they are not solid and satisfactory. Even Lecky, who in the main sympathizes with their trend, discerns in them the spirit of special pleading, and declines to subscribe to them without reserve. He condemns Gibbon for the "persistence with which he estimates persecutions by the number of deaths, rather than by the amount of suffering." And then he gives a view of pagan atrocities, the result of his own investigation, which serves as a sufficient answer to the specious palliations put forth by his brother rationalists. He closes his first volume on "European Morals," with these words: "We read of Christians bound in chairs of red-hot iron, while the stench of their half-consumed flesh rose in a suffocating cloud to heaven; of others who were torn to the very bone by shells, or hooks of iron; of holy virgins given over to the lust of the gladiator or to the mercies of the pander; of two hundred and twenty-seven converts sent on one occasion to the mines, each with the sinews of one leg severed by a red-hot iron, and with an eye scooped from its socket; of fires so slow that the victim writhed for hours in their agonies; of bodies torn limb from limb, or sprinkled with burning lead; of mingled salt and vinegar poured over the flesh that was bleeding from the rack; of tortures prolonged and varied through entire days. For the love of their divine Master, for the cause they believed to be true, men, and even weak girls, endured these things without flinching, when one word would have freed them from their suffering."²

But surely it must be evident, though Lecky does not say so, that such horrors could not be perpetrated without involving an immense and incalculable loss of life. The very severity of persecution suggests at once an idea of its enormous extent. These excesses of cruelty reveal a vicious disregard of everything sacred, and would hardly have been possible in a limited circle. They are simply the climax and index of a widespread spirit of inhumanity, which once enlarged would hardly fail to assert itself in crimes against mankind proportionate in number to its own awful dimensions. We are warranted, therefore, in measuring the extent of persecution by the intensity, and the magnitude and malignity of the demoniacal fury by which it was inaugurated and directed. Thus judged, we shall not regard as incredible the picture drawn by

¹ "Church of the Early Fathers," p. 163.

² "History of Morals," Vol. I, pp. 493-496.

Lanciani, which taxes the imagination to compass the vast area of brutal indignities inflicted on the early Church, but which, coming from the pen of a recent explorer, discredits the over-confident assumptions of Gibbon and his recent imitators. He writes: "In 249 the 'days of terror' returned, and continued fiercer than ever under the rules of Decius, Gallus, and Valerianus. The last persecution, that of Diocletian and his colleagues, was the longest and most cruel of all. For the space of ten years not a day of mercy shown over the *ecclesia fidelium*. The historian Eusebius, an eyewitness, says that, when the persecutors became tired of bloodshed, they contrived a new form of cruelty. They put out the right eyes of the confessors, cut the tendon of their left legs, and then sent them to the mines, lame, half-blind, half-starved, and flogged nearly to death. In Book VIII, chapter 12, the historian says that the number of sufferers were so great that no account could be kept of them in the archives of the Church. The memory of this decade of horrors has never died out in Rome. We have still a local tradition, not altogether unfounded, of 10,000 Christians who were condemned to quarry materials for Diocletian's Baths, and who were put to death after the dedication of the building."¹

Historians have been accustomed to reckon ten general persecutions, which have been classified as follows by Broughton: 1. Under Nero, 64 to 68 A. D. 2. Under Domitian, 95 and 96 A. D. 3. Under Trajan, 97 to 116 A. D. 4. Under Antoninus Pius, 136 to 156 A. D. 5. Under Severus, 199 to 211 A. D. 6. Under Maximinus, 235 A. D. 7. Under Decius, 249 to 251 A. D. 8. Under Valerian, 257 to 260 A. D. 9. Under Aurelian, 273 to 275 A. D. 10. Under Diocletian, 302 to 312 A. D. This arrangement has not always been adhered to by writers who are wedded to the notion that there must have been ten persecutions, no more and no fewer; and some of them have tried to find a place in their somewhat artificial scheme, probably inspired by what is revealed regarding the ten kings who make war against the Lamb,² for the severe measures enacted by Adrian (118 to 126), and by Marcus Aurelius (161 to 174) against the kingdom of Christ. Probably this scheme of counting by tens originated with Augustine. Lactantius, however, recognized only six seasons of special proscription and cruelty. The number can readily be increased or diminished according to the fancy or the method of the student. To me the entire period embraced within three centuries was in reality one of persecution, varying in degrees of intensity, with now a lull and then a tempest, with brief or prolonged intermissions of deceitful calm, but with never an assurance of immunity from attack on the part of the authorities or the mob. The Church was throughout this entire time practically proscribed, and if she was permitted a respite occasionally from excruciating agony, it was merely due to the weariness of her tormentors, or to the changing moods and oscillating policy of the emperors. She had no rights which anyone was particularly bound to respect, and when it suited the governing powers, she was simply made to feel — as far as whips and fire could make her feel — her desolate and outcast plight. It is surely hardly worth while to classify her sufferings, after the manner of the ten plagues, when for 300 years she knew hardly anything else than the plagues of anguish, trial, and bitter sorrow. Her condition through all these years may be likened to that of a ship on a stormy sea. Her path lay through the billowy waters of tribulation, with here and there a mighty wave, such as may be seen in mid-Atlantic towering over the restless floods, and engulfing all its smaller neighbors, breaking over her and threatening to swallow up her precious treasures. Such a wave dashed against her when Nero imputed to her hated deeds of shame, and tried to attach to her the odium of an execrable crime, and when, according to Clement of Rome, "By reason of jealousy, women, the Danaids and Dirce, being persecuted, after that they had suffered cruel and unholy insults, safely reached the goal in the race of faith, and received a noble reward, feeble though they were in body." Similar tidal waves beat upon the helpless bark of Christ during succeeding reigns.

¹ "Pagan and Christian Rome," p. 314.

² Revelation xvii, 12-14.

The outbreak of savagery under Domitian had in it much of personal vindictiveness. Why it should have been thus inspired no one knows unless it was occasioned by the discovery that some among his own near relations had professed the "degrading superstition." It is believed that 40,000 of God's dear children were butchered during the administration of Domitian. With the accession of Trajan, proceedings against the Christians became more formal and regular, and the relation of government toward them and their institutions were inquired into and defined. As a result of this new departure, multitudes were called on to surrender ease, safety, possessions, and not infrequently life itself.

While Antoninus Pius was of a more humane disposition than Trajan, nevertheless, Augustine, who had opportunity sufficient to learn all the facts, includes him with the persecutors, and the rescript of Marcus Aurelius went far beyond the instructions issued by Trajan in his correspondence with Pliny. Accusations were encouraged by bribes, and the confiscated property of the saints went to the informers. As a result, a vast crowd of unfortunates were cast into prison, and, for the sake of deserving the reward, betrayers of innocent blood charged their victims with the perpetration of unspeakable crimes. Traces of this policy were soon visible in torture and bloodshed throughout Italy, Byzantium, Gaul, and Africa; and among its own prominent sufferers may be named Blandina, a tender maiden, who to all questions replied: "I am a Christian! Among us no wickedness is committed"; and Justin Martyr, whose mind had been favorably influenced toward Christianity by the martyrdom of others, and who at last himself secured its crown. He testifies:¹ "I heard of the accusations brought against Christians; yet I saw them fearless in the midst of death, and of all other calamities which seemed terrible, nor could I understand how it was possible that they could be guilty of the wickedness and licentiousness with which they were charged." And he also, in his turn, witnessed in his death to the pure, elevating, and sustaining influence of the Gospel. We have the account in Eusebius² of his arrest and of his conduct before the bar of Rusticus, one of the emperor's philosophers. He appeared there the center of a group of prisoners, the names of some of whom have been preserved. These are: Chariton and Charitana; Evelpistus, a member of the imperial household; Hierax, a Phrygian; also Peor and Liberianus. During the trial the following conversation is reported to have occurred:

Rusticus. "Hear, thou who art called an orator, and who thinkest thou hast gained the true philosophy; if I scourge thee from head to foot, thinkest thou that thou wilt go to heaven?"

Justin. "Should I suffer what thou threatenest, I hope to receive the reward of true Christians."

Rusticus. "Thou imaginest, then, that thou shalt go to heaven, and be there rewarded?"

Justin. "I do not only imagine it, but know it, and cannot entertain the least doubt respecting it."

He and his companions were then commanded to go and sacrifice to the gods, and were warned if they refused that they would be tormented without mercy.

Justin. "There is nothing which we more earnestly desire than to endure torments for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ; it is this which will advance our happiness, and impart courage before his bar, at which the whole world must appear."

His associates likewise cried out: "Accomplish thy purpose quickly; we are Christians and will never sacrifice to idols."

Rusticus. "As for those who refuse to sacrifice to the gods, and to obey the imperial commands, they shall be first scourged, and then beheaded according to the law."

This sentence was mercilessly executed, and thus died Justin, "the most celebrated of those who flourished in those times."

¹ "Apologia," II and XII.

² Ecclesiastical History, B. W. C., 16.

Commodus, who succeeded Aurelius, 180 A. D., stayed these harsh proceedings. Not, however, immediately, for during the midsummer of that year the Medaurian and Scillitan massacres took place. But in a comparatively brief space of time after becoming sole emperor, he was influenced by the "God-loving concubine," Marcia, whom he promoted to the throne in 183, to grant peace and respite from terror to the churches. This time endured for about twenty years. While it continued immense activity prevailed among God's people, and had this energetic enterprise been confined to them all would have been well. But the period was also marked by the revival of heathenism. Every effort was put forth to bring back society to the old gods. Theurgy, and magic, and demon-worship were introduced; voluptuous indulgences were converted into religious rites; and self-inflicted punishments were encouraged as evidence of most extraordinary piety. The Persian deity, Mithras, was especially honored; and Apollonius of Tyana was paraded by Philostratus as superior in wonder-working power to Jesus Christ. Neo-Platonism was affected by Julia Domna, the consort of Septimius Severus, while her elder niece, Soæmias, mother of Elagabalus, was devoted to neo-Pythagoreanism, and her younger niece, Mammæa, was captivated by pure Orientalism. These women of rank, with their philosophical predilections and amours, could hardly fail directly or indirectly to influence the future of the Church. The power of misguided women over the masculine mind is always to be feared. It is subtle and dominating, and, where differences of religious opinion have been involved, has sometimes shown itself to be intolerant and merciless. From this deceitful calm, persecution stormed forth once more. After the assassination of Commodus (192 A. D.), and the abortive efforts of Pertinax and Didius Julianus to wear the purple, Septimius Severus ascended the throne, and in 202 A. D. a new decree was issued against the Christians. To what extent his wife was responsible for this hostile demonstration cannot now be determined; but it is not unlikely that she encouraged him in a course that would strengthen her own party. There was really no relaxation of cruel measures while her husband reigned; but a lull occurred during the short administrations of Caracalla and Elagabalus, and deepened into a period of peace under the more gentle sway of Alexander Severus (222-235 A. D.). It is widely credited that his mother, Julia Mammæa, when in Antioch had met with Origen, and had been deeply impressed by his teachings, and that, while not abandoning her interest in Orientalism, had desired to find a meeting place of friendship for the rival systems. It is, therefore, assumed that she disposed her son in the direction of toleration; and if this be true, it goes to show how much of the varying fortune of the early Church may have depended on the potency of woman. She made society in no small degree, then as now, and there can be but little doubt that if her fidelity and heroic self-surrender advanced the cause of Christ, her narrowness and vindictiveness had much to do with its struggles and its anguish.

The quiet that prevails for a moment in the trough of the sea is not assuring. It will speedily be overwhelmed and obliterated by the roll and sweep of the towering wave. In a manner somewhat similar Maximin the Thracian, who was chosen to succeed Alexander Severus (235 A. D.) speedily deluged the fair hopes that had cheered the Church for twelve or thirteen years. Pontianus and Hippolytus of Rome were banished to Sardinia, and many others were exposed to severe and bitter trials. In three years the Thracian had ended his regal career, but those who came after him, Gordian, Philip, and Decius, were animated by no nobler sentiments toward the followers of Christ. It is claimed that under the Gordians and Philip, called the Arabian, the disciples were unmolested; but these rulers were no more reconciled to them and their teachings than were others, and presumably were too busy guarding their own precarious authority to venture on extensive expeditions against the faith. With Decius it was different. He was a vigorous man and felt greater security in his perilous office than did his immediate predecessors. Moreover, he was something of a statesman, and was anxious to revive and consolidate the power of Rome. Believing unity in religion to be

indispensable to national strength and greatness, he proscribed Christianity in an edict proclaimed in 250 A. D. But he desired to avoid unnecessary bloodshed, though he was always ready to doom to death bishops, whom he regarded as ringleaders in the prevailing mischief, and is said to have dreaded the election of one in his imperial city as much as he feared the choice of a rival Cæsar. He sought to reclaim the wanderers from the heathen fold, as a company of wolves might be solicitous to draw a flock of defenseless sheep into the glades and solitudes of their native forests. The reluctant were to be admonished, the hesitating ones were to be tortured; then confiscation and banishment were to be tried; and finally, as a last resort — death. But no indiscriminate massacres were to be allowed, and no haste to slaughter instead of first trying to rescue the infatuated from their folly. Organizations were to be broken up, property to be appropriated by the State, punishments to be graded to the degree of guilt, and life was to be spared as long and as far as possible.

But, notwithstanding all these precautions, and the seeming desire to pursue a humane policy, the ranks of the faithful were fearfully decimated, and for a season it looked as if Christianity might be effectually exterminated. Gallus and Valerian adopted the methods of Decius. On the election of the latter in 253 A. D. he exercised some measure of clemency toward the oppressed Christians, but soon returned to the policy of Decius, under whom he had served as censor. Indeed, he went farther in his opposition to the existence of the religion whose cross threatened to become more powerful than his scepter.

The year 258 A. D. was memorable. Everything like forbearance and consideration ceased. An edict was published that put an end to temporizing. Bishops, presbyters, and deacons were to be executed without delay; all Christian senators and magistrates were to lose their property, and if they did not abjure were to be slain. Women, likewise, were to be deprived of their possessions and be sent into exile, while members of the imperial household who held, or ever had held, to the detestable creed, were to be sent as slaves to toil on the estates belonging to the throne. While this fearful work was going on, Bishop Sixtus was arrested in the Catacombs, where he was engaged in directing divine services. He was condemned and was led back to the sacred spot where he had just been celebrating the Lord's Supper and there beheaded. On the way to the Catacombs one of his deacons, Laurentius by name, met him: "Whither goest thou, father, without thy son? Whither priest, without thy deacon?"

To his questioning Sixtus is said to have replied: "Cease weeping; thou wilt soon follow me." Soon indeed, for on the fourth day after, being the tenth of August, 258 A. D., Laurentius was bound to an iron chair and destroyed by fire. This infamous year likewise witnessed the martyrdom of Cyprian, one of the most vigorous minds in the earlier stages of Church progress. He was brought before the proconsul at Carthage. The trial was short and not very formal.

"Thou art Thascius Cyprianus?" inquired the judge.

"I am," answered the sturdy bishop.

"Thou hast permitted thyself to be made an official in a sacrilegious sect?"

"True."

"The sacred emperors have commanded thee to sacrifice."

"THAT I WILL NOT DO."

"Consider it well."

"Do what is commanded thee; in a cause so just no reflection is necessary."

He was promptly sentenced to die by the sword, and hailed his doom with an ejaculation of thanksgiving. His demeanor was firm and triumphant. The poor executioner trembled as he drew near the condemned. Cyprian calmly unloosed his robe and prepared his neck to receive the fatal stroke. By his own majestic fortitude he encouraged the official to discharge his duty;

and, after a few moments spent in prayer, the indomitable spirit was released to share with the redeemed in an eternity of praise.

Unexpectedly the clouds were dispersed. Valerian was taken prisoner by the Persians. His reign suddenly closed and Gallienus succeeded (261 A. D.) to the empire. It seemed as though Summer had dawned on Christianity after its long Winter; for the new ruler revoked the edicts of his predecessors, and if he did not make Christianity a *religio licita*, he treated it with the most distinguished favor. He returned to the Church its forfeited property, and permitted its religious services to be conducted without molestation. The waste places were rapidly restored, and the work of converting the heathen was resumed with old-time fervor. An immense number became "obedient to the faith," and on every side evidences of prosperity multiplied. Alas, for human expectations, this gracious season had its limits. Gallienus was slain at Milan in 268 A. D. This calamity, however, did not end the period of repose and good will. Claudius Gothicus and Aurelian adhered in the main to the policy of conciliation. But during the closing years of the latter portentous storm-clouds gathered on the horizon. A strong party arose in favor of the discredited and neglected Roman divinities. Once more a persistent attempt was to be made to bring back what many regarded as the better times of heathenism. On this movement the emperor smiled. He sought to place a violent restraint on Christian tendencies, which threatened an expansion dangerous to the existence of the old mythologies. Consequently he reversed the action of Gallienus, and signed an edict against the Christians in 275 A. D., the year of his own violent death, and thus prepared the way for the crowning persecution under Diocletian. This emperor changed the form of Roman government, appointing colleagues of higher and lower rank, to administer affairs, and even moved the chief seat of authority from the eternal city. He transferred his residence to Nicomedia. But if he was determined on innovations in government, he was equally set on reaction in religion. Though his wife, Prisca, and his daughter, Valeria, were at least sympathetically Christians, he was resolved to reëstablish the pagan cult, which did not presume to interfere with monarchs, and even increased their influence by consenting to their deification. He gave to himself the high-sounding title of *Dominus*, "Lord," and spoke of himself as Jovius, and called his associate in power, the crafty Maximian, Herculus. Nothing less than the mantle of Zeus was adequate to adorn his majesty; and only the temple of Jupiter was sacred enough to receive his adoration. He tried to build a new political structure on the crumbling foundations of an effete religion. But in seeking to actualize his ideal he did not at the outset contemplate employing coercive measures. He could not understand why there should be any serious objections to compromises on the part of the Church, and he employed his arts to bring about such a result. His pacific policy was a transparent failure. God's children were not to be seduced by royal smiles and specious arguments. Galerius, one of the two Cæsars, and son-in-law to Diocletian, became incensed by their firmness and set himself to accomplish their ruin. His mother, Romula, who delighted in Phrygian orgies, and Hierocles, governor of Bithynia, and a philosopher of the violently intolerant sort, did all in their power to excite his prejudices and stimulate his anger. He was young and strong; Diocletian old and feeble. He was active, impatient, and fanatical; while Diocletian was vain, cautious, and moderate; and it is hardly to be wondered at that he should have gained a masterful sway over the mind of his senior. But at the beginning the emperor would only permit him to try the effect of pressure—and that only within limits—on the army. He was not long in availing himself of this concession. Orders were issued requiring all soldiers to sacrifice to the gods, and threatening degradation in case any of the men refused. Many Christians were in the ranks and not a few held important commands. To the surprise and consternation of Galerius, resignations were sent to headquarters, and entire companies declined to follow the imperial standards. This looked like mutiny. But it was not. It was only another proof that the will of Christ was considered more sacred

and imperative than the will of any earthly ruler. The spirit of this revolt is summed up in the declaration of Marcellus, who was done to death because he renounced his military position: "From this moment I cease to serve your generals. I scorn to worship your gods of wood and stone, which are only dumb idols. If military service brings with it the obligation to sacrifice to the gods and to the emperor, I throw down my belt and staff. I desert the standards and cease to be a soldier."

The climax was at hand. Diocletian, still averse to bloodshed, imagined that he could abolish Christianity by proclamation. An edict was issued designating February 23, 303 A. D., when occurred the Feast of the Terminalia, as the fitting time for an end to be put to the religion of our Lord. One circumstance peculiarly marked this attempt at suppression—the sacred writings of the Church, her Gospels, biographies and apostolic epistles, were to be exterminated. If her literature were blotted out, it was sagaciously surmised, her faith could not survive. The loss entailed on humanity by this policy can hardly be estimated. It is known that many manuscripts of incalculable value perished, and the few that were saved were only rescued by the zeal and astuteness of the clergy. "A singular expedient was adopted by Mensurius, bishop of Carthage. He removed all the precious manuscripts from his Church, and left in their stead a collection of the writings of heretics, which were seized. Annulinus, the proconsul, was informed of this device, but declined to make search in the house of the bishop for the true writings. It appears that this was not the only occasion on which the officers of justice were deceived by the substitution of false writings for the true. Those who gave up their sacred manuscripts, in order to make peace with the heathen magistrates, were branded with the names of *traditores* and were excommunicated."

Not only were the much-prized documents of Christianity officially doomed; its possessions, edifices of every kind, were condemned to destruction as well. On the dawning of the *Terminalia*, officers of the law invaded the great church of Nicomedia, and speedily a terrific conflagration swallowed up its ornaments and treasures, and left it a heap of smoldering ruins. Other buildings were given to the torch, and in many portions of the empire ecclesiastical property was ruthlessly sacrificed. Confusion and distrust spread. Acts of resistance and retaliation on the part of the harried disciples were suspected, especially in the mysterious breaking out of two fires in the emperor's palace at Nicomedia, and in some popular disturbances that alarmed Melitene and Antioch. The excitement must have been intense, and during its continuance not improbably a few of the sufferers may have been impelled to strike back. And why not? Just think of their condition and of the pains and penalties to which they were liable under the government of one who desired to avoid bloodshed! All Christians were deprived of their civil rights, were reduced to slavery, and stigmatized as outlaws. Appeal against every kind of outrage and torture ceased with their proscription. Their maids and matrons were flogged with rods, half-naked, up and down the public streets, and some of them were even sentenced to the brothel, and their men were lacerated and ignominiously mutilated. Edict followed edict. Life was no longer respected. Whether with the approval of Diocletian, or not, death was again invoked in its most awful forms to extirpate a religion that would not yield to other modes of coercion. New torments were invented. Many persons were slowly consumed by fire; others succumbed to a bath of boiling lead; and others yet were simply hewn to pieces. But the story need not be pursued in all its sickening details. Suffice it, so fearful were these times that not a few apostatized; while to their honor be it recorded, where often strong men faltered, women and children persevered unto the end. A young girl by the name of Victoria could have saved herself by pleading insanity, a defense made on her behalf by a loving relative, but she preferred to taste death for Christ. And a little boy named Hilarinus would not accept deliverance on account of his tender years, but cried out with heroic courage: "Do what you please. I am a Christian."

Gradually the violence of the persecution diminished. The Church stood calmly resolute. Though bleeding from many wounds, she lived. The butchers grew weary of the slaughter; and there were more victims waiting to be slain than there were knives to slay them. Then Diocletian was prostrated by what seemed a paralytic stroke, and Galerius was smitten down by a mysterious disease, which made him an object of loathing to his attendants, and from which he suffered indescribable agony. Some persons discerned in these afflictions the marks of retribution, and speculation as to their causes could not be restrained. Many shuddered at the vengeance which apparently had overtaken the enemies of the Church, and not a few among the heathen were filled with consternation. Nor was it diminished, but rather heightened, when Galerius issued (311 A. D.) an edict putting an end to persecution. He was convinced of the futility of forceful measures to regulate the religious opinions of his subjects. Weary, weak, wretched, a physical wreck, he sent forth a document which announced to the empire his own defeat, and which reminds us of the great, though oft-forgotten truth, that "he fights ill who fights against God."

Yes; no weapon formed can ultimately prevail against Christ's Church. She has always been in the minority, and yet in the long run has triumphed over the majority. It is not for her to count battalions. A just cause can make headway against iniquitous oppression, though the latter may be mailed in steel, and the former be armed only with a shepherd's sling and a few smooth pebbles taken from a brook. It seems as if God delighted in overcoming mightiness by feebleness, and in dispersing the multitude by the hand of the few. Modern history records innumerable instances where unpretentious Christian communities have protested against and opposed political tyranny, social inequalities, and municipal corruptions, and have made themselves felt, though overwhelming odds have derided and abused them, and sought in every way to circumvent them. The world is not necessarily governed by majorities; and we need not, therefore, be surprised that the early Church not only withstood the crushing weight of the Roman empire, but in the end trampled on its dignities, and seated herself in its throne.

"The lions' feet, the lions' lips, are dyed with crimson gore,
A look of faith, an unbreathed prayer, the martyr's pangs are o'er.
Proud princes and grave senators gazed on that fearful sight,
And even women seemed to share the savage crowd's delight;
But what the guilt, that on the dead a fate so fearful drew?
A blameless faith was all the crime the Christian martyr knew;
And where the crimson current flowed, upon that barren sand,
Up sprang a tree, whose vigorous boughs soon overspread the land.
O'er distant isles its shadow fell, nor knew its roots decay,
E'en when the Roman Caesar's throne and empire passed away."¹

The student of these sanguinary annals ought never to overlook the fact that they are illustrative of the strain to which the conscientious life is still subjected in the world. The path of moral perfection is ever the path of suffering. Official tortures are abolished everywhere—at least with few exceptions. The Stundists in Russia and the Armenians in Turkey even now are oppressed by men in power. But, as a rule, freedom of thought has little to fear from the commonwealth. The crown of heaven is only won by battling against deadly antagonists. He likewise is the martyr, who for the sake of right will not abandon his convictions to escape censure and loss; and who, without hesitancy, accepts poverty and obscurity, rather than prove faithless to his trust, be that trust mercantile, political, social, or religious.

"Meek souls there are, who little dream
Their daily strife an angel's theme;
Or that the rod they take so calm,
Shall prove in heaven a martyr's palm."

¹ Hamilton Buchanan.

Perhaps they can never quite dream this dream, or comprehend the significance of their struggles, until they enter the heavenly kingdom. But at least from the tenor of this narrative all can see the value of steadfastness. Loyalty to conviction is worth more than liberality. Faithfulness has wrought more for progress than breadth. Latitudinarianism would never have overthrown a heathen shrine; and the poetry that sees only the greatness of the good in evil things, and never the immeasurable mischievousness, will hardly succeed in expurgating the evil. It is easier to be friendly with errors and corruptions than to denounce and resist them.

There is a venerable legend suggestive in this connection. It is related that when the Neronian persecution prevailed, the disciples besought Peter to flee from the city, that his life might not be hazarded. He hastened along the Appian Way, and when about two miles from Rome he was met by a vision of Christ. In wonder he exclaimed: "Lord, whither goest thou!" The Master replied: "I go to Rome to be crucified a second time." Immediately the divine form vanished, and Peter perceived that the Savior had rebuked him for his flight. He deliberated hardly a moment, but straightway returned to his post, to duty, and to death. Many a man, like the apostle, has abandoned his high vocation as a representative of eternal truth, that he might escape censure and ridicule, and might not be classed with the uncultured and obstinate crowd who prefer suffering to shame. But if he were a genuine servant of Christ he went not far along this cowardly path without remonstrance from the divine Spirit dwelling in him. When faltering at the bar of his own conscience he must have heard the mysterious voice exclaiming:¹ "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." It is the need of the hour that this voice should be heard and honored. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life"; "he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death"; "to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna"; "he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations"; "he that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment"; "him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God"; and "to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

Such the message of the Spirit to the churches. Never a word of hope, encouragement or promise to moral cowardice or disloyalty. Everything to firmness, conscientiousness, and steadfastness; nothing in time or eternity to fickleness, perfidy, and treachery. Everything to the conqueror; nothing to the craven. In spirit the Christians of all ages are allied with the martyrs. The difference between them is purely one of condition or environment, and not of obligation or of vocation. Alike they are pledged to uphold the Gospels at every and any cost, and alike they are to pass through the great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. If any man has no heart for fellowship with this "noble army," he can hardly claim a place in the company of the redeemed. But happy are they who are willing even now to endure crosses and losses for the truth's sake. Happy the men and women who are ready to lay down life itself for humanity, and who are sustained by the poet's vision, and breathe the poet's prayer:

"A noble army, men and boys,
The matron and the maid,
Around the Savior's throne rejoice,
In robes of light arrayed.

"They climbed the dizzy steep of heaven
Through perils, toil, and pain;
O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train."

¹ Revelation ii, 10.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LABARUM OF VICTORY.

THE year 312 A. D. is famous in the annals of Christianity and marks the beginning of a new epoch in the world's history. Over the Cottian Alps a small army, barely numbering 60,000, but consisting of hardy and war-inured veterans, had swept onward to the plains of Italy, like one of the mountain torrents in that region — strong, swift, and irresistible. It was late in the summer, or early in the autumn, when tidings of this insolent and intrepid invasion reached the imperial capital. At first it was a subject almost of derision, and excited contempt rather than alarm. Had not Severus with a far more imposing force been obliged to retreat, in 307 A. D., from before the gates of Rome, and had he not found that the morasses and walls of Ravenna were insufficient to shield his person from the superior craft of the power he had ventured to assail; and if he had failed, why be apprehensive of serious calamities resulting from presumptuous demonstrations of an inferior body of troops? What were 60,000 or 80,000 men in the presence of 170,000 foot and 18,000 horse that were being concentrated against them? Cause for sport rather than of fear, this reckless expedition directed against the eternal city, the mistress of the world. Still there was some degree of excitement observable among the people as they conversed on passing events and observed the hurrying to and fro of soldiers and the unusually grim bearing of the prætorian guard. In the neighborhood of the Colosseum, whose massive stones had been cemented by the tears and blood of 12,000 captive Jews, and on the Forum of Julius Cæsar and the Forum Romanum, groups of citizens doubtless discussed, though without anything like panic in their speech, the supreme question of the hour. The aristocratic classes, the proud patricians and their families on the Palatine, where from an immemorable date the rulers of society had built their palaces, unquestionably must have been languidly solicitous as to the outcome of a movement that arrayed the supreme authorities of the empire against each other; and some among the affluent, more curious than the others, may have climbed the Pincian, where once Lucullus feasted Cicero and Pompey in his villa, and where Messalina had abandoned herself to voluptuous orgies, to see if the country round about gave evidence of an approaching enemy, as Vettius had sought signs of the “awful storm from Ostia,” which, in the person of Claudius, was to engulf the adulterous queen and her lovers. Nor could the temples of the gods have failed to be at such a time as this centers of interest, though the thought of extreme peril was not entertained by the populace. True, multitudes of the people had lost faith in paganism and cared little for Castor and Pollux, had outgrown their veneration for the Vestals, and rarely sought the fanes of Concord, Fides Publica, Jupiter Capitolinus, Janus Quirinus, Mars, or Victory, or any of the rest once so dear and sacred to the Roman heart. Nevertheless, many of those who had not become Christians, and whose superstitions were easily aroused by any unexpected and threatening developments, would naturally return to their neglected altars to supplicate for favor and protection, especially as the foremost official, if not the foremost man, in the capital had consulted the Sibylline Books, and had not failed to receive an encouraging, though, as usual, a dubious reply.

The Christians themselves, with their strong reliance on Providence, and with the confidence of ever growing influence proceeding from ever increasing numbers, could not have been indifferent spectators of what was passing round them. They had no reason to suppose that in any sense a deliverer was coming to the succor of the faithful; neither had they visions of luminous crosses and other signs of impending revolution. To them the issue of battle might mean a change of heathen masters, and might affect their social standing for good or ill in some

respects; but nothing more. How could they have foreseen that they were on the eve of a tremendous upheaval; and that their wonderful successes against heathenism were about to be acknowledged, the sacred symbol of salvation about to supplant the eagle at the head of the legions, and the door be opened for the spiritual conquest of mankind? So wonderful a transformation in their condition and circumstances could hardly have been anticipated; and yet, who knows? God reigns and all things are possible. Out of existing troubles some advantage might possibly arise to the Church. How, or in what way, no one knew; but it was right to seek divine aid in every season of perplexity. And, while citizens were idly gossiping, bands encamping round the city, senators hastening to offer money and men to the emperor, pagan priests fanning the embers of their incredible myths, military officers inspecting the defensive walls, and an air of uncertainty hung over the scene, the simple-minded disciples of our Lord, whom Tacitus had described in his day as "a vast multitude," in their places of worship doubtless called on the Most High to remember Zion and cause all things to work together for her good; and not a few may have crept unseen once more into the Catacombs, where millions of Christian graves sanctified many miles of subterranean streets, and, moved by the monuments commemorating the suffering past, may have cried: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

But the contempt of some, the indifference of many and the apparent confidence of all, suddenly gave place to something like consternation. Tidings in swift succession reached the city of battles won by the enemy, and of a rapidity in executing manœuvres and of moving his forces characteristic only of Julius Cæsar and recalling his achievements. One day it was reported that Susa, at the foot of the Alps, had fallen; on another, that Turin had surrendered; then that the conquering foe had entered Milan; then that he was marshalling his little armies along the Æmilian and Flamilian ways; then that he was encamped on the Adige and had encompassed Verona; and then, worst of all, that he had defeated Pompeianus and was approaching with terrible celerity a place called Saxa Rubra, not over nine or ten miles from Rome. A last and supreme effort must be made to arrest his progress. All was confusion, and excitement, and apprehension in the city. Horrible forebodings everywhere prevailed. Lying oracles were consulted by the pagan; money and precious stones were hidden, and retreats where concealment could be obtained were sought; and the Christians, with a trifle more of pallor on their faces and with something more of earnestness in their voices, were entreating God to be a munition of rocks and a sure defense to his people. But nine miles away, while prayers were ascending in church and catacomb, the final act in the tragedy was being enacted. There, with the river Tiber as their base and hindering retreat, and with the right and left wings of the army extending over an immense plain, the Romans awaited the attack of their adversaries. Nor had they long to wait. The commander of the invading forces at the head of his cavalry, glitteringly arrayed, charged impetuously the Moors and Numidians, who held the center, and overwhelmed them. He and his soldiers struck the lines of the defense as a thunderbolt crashes through trees and masonry, and they wavered and broke. Nor would the conflict have been prolonged had it not been for the disciplined courage of the prætorian guard. These stubborn veterans comprehended the situation at a glance and realized the difficulty of contending with the Gallic horse. But, though dismayed, they were not prepared to yield without a struggle, and, keeping well together, they fought doggedly and valiantly; nor would they give an inch, but fell one by one at their post. Few of them escaped the awful slaughter; and nevermore does this old guard that had played so questionable a part in the election and the fate of emperors appear again in history. They had been swept away and with them went the cause they had so heroically upheld. The rout was general.

Throughout the ranks disorder prevailed. The Italians had lost the day, and the retreat had become a hurried flight of cravens from the destroying sword of the victors. Riderless

horses tore furiously through bleeding companies and groups of fugitives, and trampled the wounded and dying beneath their hoofs, while the shouts of the conquerors and the execrations of their victims added to the indescribable and sickening horrors of the scene. Many of the fleeing soldiers perished in the waters of the Tiber, and others were crushed to death in the crowds struggling to escape by the Milvian bridge. That narrow passage spanning the stream soon became choked by an utterly demoralized and desperate mass, pushing, fighting, writhing, cursing, and even slaying, striking wildly at friends and comrades in the frantic effort to secure personal safety. No consideration was shown to age or rank; the highest officers as well as the meanest subaltern being indiscriminately mixed in the mad melee. Not even was the emperor recognized by the affrighted fugitives as he sought a way across the Milvian bridge, by which a secure asylum might be reached, but was rudely jostled and roughly thrust from the path of those who but on yesterday would have trembled at his slightest frown. Alas! poor Cæsar! He was Pontifex Maximus, Augustus, and twenty other mighty things, and had claimed, indeed, to be the sole Augustus in the empire, and had now to strive like any common plebeian in a stampeding herd of disorganized soldiery for bare existence. Neither was he equal to the savage scuffle, but was borne down by the rushing, swirling throng, was caught in the vortex of panic-stricken humanity, was sucked under the feet of the brutal multitude, and was finally shoved off the bridge, battered, bruised, wounded, into the river, where next day his sadly disfigured corpse was found.

So fell Maxentius, master of Rome, before the triumphant arms of Constantine, called the Great, who, with incredible celerity, had traversed the distance between Gaul and Italy, had vanquished armies, and over the dead body of his rival now marched to claim the reward of his prowess — the throne of the tyrant and the homage of a people whom he had delivered from his violence and vices.

These two rulers in a very important sense represent the social and religious transition through which the Roman world was passing at the beginning of the fourth century. Maxentius impersonated the superstition, the weakness, viciousness, and cruelty of the old order hastening to extinction; while Constantine embodied in some degree the faith, the vigor, the virtue, and the magnanimity of the new, rapidly advancing toward supremacy. The first was the product of paganism, of pagan literature, customs, institutions, and traditions; while the second was the product of Christian influences, though contaminated, unfortunately, and measurably vitiated by heathenism. Maxentius was the unmistakable and legitimate child of the decaying idolatrous civilization; but Constantine was the progeny of parents who had never been joined in wedlock, and never could be honorably wedded — the new Christian cult and the old heathen culture. Maxentius was the son of Maximian, who had been associated with Diocletian as Augustus in the cares of empire. That he had not secured the confidence of his father was made apparent when Maximian and Diocletian resigned the purple (303 A. D.); for he was not then chosen to the rank of Cæsar. Even his father-in-law, the haughty Galerius, who had become Augustus on the abdication of his seniors, discerned in him no special merit; for he passed him by and exalted Severus to the throne of Italy and Africa. Indignant and outraged by this contemptuous treatment, Maxentius seized the first opportunity to rebel and assert his claims. Severus being absent from the city, he suborned the senate and soldiery with gifts and flattering promises, and assumed the imperial ornaments. Prominent leaders, realizing his incapacity, and he himself probably having a dull consciousness of his own weakness, agreed to invite his father to abandon his retirement and once more enter on the responsibilities of government. The father saved the son. He destroyed Severus, and compelled Galerius to accede to what was practically an usurpation. But, once secure in his high office, the son, with base ingratitude, speedily broke with his sire, who was forced to seek a refuge at the court of Constantine, at Arles, on whom he conferred the title of Augustus, and to whom he gave his



CONSTANTINE THE GREAT.

daughter Fausta in marriage. At this time the affairs of the empire were in a deplorable condition. Six rulers divided the authority of state and were secretly plotting against each other or openly devising plans for the concentration of power in the hands of one supreme magistrate. Five of these rulers were destined to early graves. Maximian, discovered in an attempt to dethrone his son-in-law, Constantine, saved himself from a worse fate by committing suicide; Maximin, nephew of Galerius, at a later date, having failed in an enterprise against Lucinius, imitated his example; Galerius himself perished of a horrible disease; Maxentius, as we have described, came to an ignominious end at the Milvian bridge; and, some nine years after, Lucinius provoked civil war, was defeated, banished to Thessalonica, and there put to death, and Constantine reigned without a rival.

Concerning Lucinius we have the following story: When about to measure strength with his great adversary, he sought to enlist on his side heathen prejudices. He railed against Constantine as a religious renegade, as a traitor to the traditions of Rome, and charged him with infamy in placing at the head of the army the sign of the cross, which through all ages had been identified with crime and violence. Against him he invoked the vengeance of the gods. According to Eusebius he deliberately said: "The present crisis will prove which of us errs in judgment, by deciding between our gods and those revered by our foes. And, indeed, if the stranger [Christ] whom we now laugh at prove victorious, we too must recognize and honor him, and bid a long farewell to those for whom we burn tapers in vain. But if our own gods conquer, as is no wise doubtful, then, after this victory, we will prosecute the war against the impious." Out of his own mouth was this despiser of Christ condemned. He appealed to the Unseen and the Unseen judged him. The army that came against him bore the hated standard of the cross. Everywhere was it victorious, and as the soldiers of idolatry hastened, demoralized, from the scene we can almost hear the taunting voice of Elijah calling as of old from Mount Carmel: "Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked." And it would have been no wonder, after the defiant and arrogant attitude of Lucinius had been answered by the arbitrament of battle, if, when all the people saw it, they had fallen on their faces, crying: "The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God." This, in fact, they did not do; but the result of the conflict deepened the popular impression that Jesus Christ was entitled to faith and homage.

During the earlier part of this brief period and when the affairs of the nation were most unsettled, restraints were few and the gravest outrages were perpetrated with safety. Officials abused their trust, the strong took advantage of the weak, and the vilest lusts were gratified at the expense of all that was sacred and noble in humanity. Rome became the center of this lawlessness and moral anarchy, and the despicable monster, who wallowed in this corruption with more shamelessness than any other, was its master, Maxentius. He was depraved in his tastes, self-willed, conceited, and cruel. Having no personal sense of honor, he could not understand its scruples in others. Being lord over the country, he supposed that he was lord over the conscience and the virtue of his subjects, and being able to confiscate their estates to his service he did not see why they should hesitate to surrender their bodies to his pleasures. Neither maidens nor matrons were safe if his ever-hungry passions demanded food. He would tear the wife from the arms of her husband, and have the husband brutally murdered if he dared remonstrate; and he was startled beyond measure when a Christian woman, Sophronia, stabbed herself rather than yield to his embraces. Exalted to enforce the law and maintain its majesty, he outraged it at every point and degraded it in his own person and conduct. He who had been set apart as the supreme judge of men had made himself the supreme criminal; he who had been sceptered and crowned to protect the weak and the wronged and to defend the land against its foes, had become the foremost and most infamous oppressor and traitor. He

was fickle, filthy, faithless, degenerate, debauched, and devilish; a sensualist by nature, a coward at heart, and a villain by preference. In him appeared the worst features of that neopaganism that had domesticated itself in the temples of Rome, the abominations, cruelties, and lasciviousness of the heathen religions from Egypt, Persia, and Phrygia that had joined hands with the old Latin deities. He reproduced them all. Maxentius was the real Pantheon; for in him dwelt the vilest of the gods. He prostrated himself before lust, anger, hatred, and all other pernicious things that pollute and destroy mankind; and in history he survives as a painful and revolting illustration of the dehumanizing influences of ancient heathenism, and as an enduring warning against every endeavor, in the name of sentiment or culture, to restore its baneful presence — or the shadow of its presence — to darken the way of the children of men.

Constantine was no saint. Like the feet of the image seen by Daniel, his character was partly iron and partly clay. But, placed by the side of his rival, Maxentius, his superior worth becomes instantly manifest. Confessedly he was not all that he might have been, and leaves much to be desired to the very end of his career. He was cautious, prudent, sagacious, and not over frank; dignified, and yet vain, stern and yet generous, ambitious and yet magnanimous, affectionate and yet jealously suspicious, intelligent and yet superstitious, a man who did not provoke war and yet did not shrink from it, and one who knew alike how to command in battle and how to execute, and that too with reckless intrepidity. In person he was tall and robust, a magnificent physical specimen of a soldier and a chief. He was scrupulous in his attire almost to foppishness, ostentatious in display, and at times a trifle stilted in his bearing. But no one knew better than he how to discard this finery for the armor of the warrior, and how to disdain the soft luxury of a palace when duty called him to the tented field. There was much of barbaric splendor in his dress when he received ambassadors; and unhappily, especially in the latter years of his reign, an occasional outbreak of barbaric ferocity, as witnessed in the deaths of Crispus his son, and Fausta his wife. Of his intellectual ability there can be no doubt. He was more than an ordinary general, more than a commonplace statesman; and by the laws enacted during his reign, and by the founding and building of Constantinople, and by his noble bearing in the heated discussions of the Nicæan Council (325 A. D.), he gave proof of remarkable sagacity, foresight, and persuasive power.

But he was no real Christian. It were to confuse the simplest of distinctions to regard this man, this murderer of his own wife and son, this official stained with the blood of his defeated colleagues' families, this rapacious ruler lavishly spending on his personal magnificence the earnings of his people, as a true follower of the just and loving Jesus. This prince, clothed with the fantastic richness of an Asiatic monarch, crowned with false hair and a diadem, even though he does profess to carry one of the nails of the blessed cross as the chief ornament in his horse's bridle, seems to have hardly anything in common with the Divine Teacher, whose servant he claimed to be. That he believed himself to be a Christian need not be questioned. He called himself a bishop of bishops; he preached to admiring audiences; and he legislated in the interests of Christianity. But his religion was sadly lacking in very essential elements. There are vague reports even of his reverting to the Flamens at Rome for purification after the death of Crispus; and it is well known that he was not baptized until he had reached the verge of the grave. Then, and not till then, in Nicomedia, as his biographer writes, "alone of Roman emperors from the beginning of time, was Constantine consecrated to be a witness of Christ in the second birth of baptism," a sentence that indicates how far many of the leaders of the Church had already departed from the doctrine of its gracious founder. He is perhaps rather to be pitied than to be blamed. Never did he receive careful instruction in the faith. He lived at a time when Christian and pagan ideas, while in conflict, were becoming strangely mixed, and his ecclesiastical advisers, Eusebius and Hosius, were too much given to courtier-like arts for them to protect him from error, especially as

they themselves were not free from its meshes. It is not, then, to be wondered at that the emperor was never quite emancipated from heathenism, even while believing himself to be a Christian, and that his baptism, being of the kind it was, pretending to supply renewing and cleansing grace, may have left him on his deathbed more of a pagan than a saint.

But the vulgar charge of hypocrisy, which has been too hastily preferred against him by writers who are inadequate students of human nature, should not for a moment be entertained. It is not difficult to impute fraud and imposition, where the actions of men are somewhat inconsistent, and where motives are open to suspicion. But this method of explaining the singularities and contradictions of eminent historical personages has of late fallen into disrepute, as being crude and superficial. Nor is it sufficient to account for the deficiencies and weaknesses of the first Christian ruler. It is well known that in 315 A. D. there was reared at the foot of the Palatine, "where the Via Triumphalis diverges from the Sacra Via," the famous Arch of Constantine, but it is not as well known that an inscription thereon testifies at this late date to the sincerity of its hero. The epigraph referred to reads:¹ "The S. P. Q. R. have dedicated this triumphal arch to Constantine, because *instinctu divinitatis* [by the will of God], and by his own virtue . . . he has liberated the country from the tyrant [Maxentius] and his faction." For a long while it was supposed that the terms I have transcribed in Latin had been added to the original text, or that they had been altered from *diis fauentibus* (by the help of the gods). But careful examinations conducted in 1863, under the auspices of Napoleon III., finally dissipated all such theories. It was demonstrated by experts that the inscription had not been tampered with, and that it, therefore, indicated on the part of Constantine sincere belief in the Christian God. At this period of his career, it should be remembered that his position was not assured. He was beset by perils and confronted by powerful and unscrupulous foes. For him, therefore, to consent that such an acknowledgment should be made on the Triumphal Arch as committed him to the new creed, speaks well for his honesty at least. However faulty his personal religion, and however adulterated by pagan ideas, he must assuredly be acquitted of conscious hypocrisy. As well make such charge against Ambrose of Milan, an incomparably nobler man, because in the funeral oration pronounced over Theodosius he subscribes to the story of Helena presenting to her son two nails taken from the rediscovered cross, and exclaims: "O wise Helena, who assigned to the cross its place upon the head of the emperor, that in the emperor the crown might be honored! O good nail, which holds the Roman empire together!"² In judging this mighty ecclesiastic, who once firmly withstood his imperial master, we would certainly make allowance for the superstitions of the times, and not denounce him as false and disingenuous because he was not altogether superior to them. And by the same rule of common sense and of charity we must exonerate the monarch, who first among kings acknowledged Christ to be his Lord, from aspersions derogatory alike to integrity and dignity.

Not Britain, but Naissus in Dacia, was the place of Constantine's nativity. He was born 274 A. D. His father, Constantius, was an eminently just, amiable, and noble prince. On the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian he had been invested with the rank of Augustus, and his subjects loved him as a most humane, gentle, and temperate sovereign. The necessities of the period compelled him for a season to fix his court at York, England, where he died, and where his son was first proclaimed Cæsar. The wife of this celebrated man was Helena, long since canonized as a saint. It is said she was the daughter of an innkeeper, and was reared among the lowly and the poor. On the exaltation of her husband she was divorced; but on the accession of her son to power she was restored to a position of honor in the royal family. She was an avowed Christian. Tradition has it that she was converted when her famous son espoused the cause of Christ. It is, however, more than likely that before his birth, or at the

¹ Lanciani, "Pagan and Christian Rome," pp. 20, 21.

² "Oratio Funebris de Morte Theodosii," p. 491.

latest, during her residence in York and prior to her divorce, she had come to sympathize with the new religion, though her comprehension of its teachings was always exceedingly faulty. She being of humble origin and mingling with humble people, the very class that had most generally and most generously accepted the creed of the great Nazarene, it would have been only natural for her to be influenced by her associates. Moreover, the Gospel having been preached in Britain by the apostles, she may again have been brought in touch with its witnesses. These suppositions being admitted, much light is thrown on Constantine's remarkable conduct. At her knee he may have heard of Jesus, of his reputed prodigies and of his saving grace. Her conceptions were doubtless crude, and, after the manner of her age, not unmingled with superstitions; but they must have been potent in determining the future of her son. Unconsciously he would be molded by them; and when he heard from her lips or from others the story of martyrdom, and how saintly men, women, and children had boldly confronted the lions in the Flavian amphitheater, the cause she pleaded and for which they heroically died would appeal to his imagination and fill him with an indescribable awe. And this predisposition in its favor could hardly fail to be strengthened by its wonderful success; and the sagacity which characterized him may have led him to perceive that, as it could not be suppressed, its adoption by the State would prove a master stroke of political wisdom.

Thus prepared by the influence of his mother and by the spirit of the age, and likewise by his own reflections on the condition and needs of the Roman world, he may have decided on a course of action that would give to the Church a protector and to society a savior. Nor is it incredible that in the excitement attending so high and novel a resolve—a resolve evidently reached amid the noise and confusion of camp and battle—that he should have imagined a vision of the cross, or have mistaken some natural phenomenon, such as a “*parhelion*,” which in the afternoon has been known to assume the form of a cross, for a supernatural sign in the heavens, given for his redemption and the redemption of the empire, as the original was reared on Calvary for the redemption of mankind. His own account of this strange experience as communicated to Eusebius, and as related by that historian, sets forth that when on the march to meet Maxentius, at Saxa Rubra, while engaged in prayer, when “the day was declining,” he saw a blazing cross appear in the sky and round about it the words “In this conquer.” He was exalted and inspired by the vision, and that night while dreaming of it Christ appeared to him in person bearing a strange standard. Next day, gathering around him the clergy, who were in camp ministering to the Christian soldiery, he advised with them regarding the significance of these things, and as a result of the conference he avowed himself a Christian and decided on substituting a new standard for the imperial eagles. Other versions of this story have descended to us from the pens of Lactantius, Nazarius, and Philostorgius. But these need not be repeated. Evidently the emperor was sincere enough in his belief that he had been supernaturally called of God to a glorious mission; but the real explanation of his alleged vision we may well leave undecided as we leave similar mysteries in the lives of others. The facts are—and these are sufficient for the students of this history—that either immediately before or subsequent to his victory over Maxentius, Constantine was impelled by some striking occurrence to proclaim himself a Christian—alas! only a nominal one, as we now understand that much abused term—and the defender of the Church, signalling his so-called conversion, and the new relation of the empire to the faith, by the adoption of a military ensign for the legions, termed the *Labarum*.

The word “*Labarum*” is supposed to be derived from the Greek *laba*, a staff; and *ruomai*, to rescue from peril. That for which it stood consisted of a gilded staff, crossed at the top by a bar from which was suspended a square purple cloth profusely ornamented with jewels. The upper extremity of the staff was decorated with a golden wreath or crown, and the sacred monogram formed of the first two letters of the Savior's name. Its appearance can readily be

pictured and has frequently been reproduced, as in Fig. A, p. 343, Vol. IX of the “*Encyclopædia Britannica*.” When it was first given to the legions is still an open question. Gibbon argues that it was not displayed until 323 A. D., as by that time the authority of Constantine was recognized everywhere; and it is not likely that he would have taken so radical a step until he was sure that he could do so without rebuke or peril from any quarter. Uhlhorn, however, contends for an earlier period. He writes: “With all the labor that has been spent on the task, it has proved impossible to make away with the fact that first in the war with Maxentius, and after that more and more prominently, the cross” (evidently he means the Labarum) “was the banner under which Constantine fought and conquered. At this date the heathen emblems disappear from the imperial standard, and are supplanted by the cross and the monogram of Christ. On the helmets, on the shields, on the very coins, we find from that date, in hundreds of examples, the cross and the two sacred letters, X P, the Greek initials of the name, Christ.” But whenever the device was committed to the army, and wherever it was afterward borne, it proclaimed the substantial victory of Christianity. Many who beheld it in the fourth century possibly argued that it was witness to a triumph wrought for religion through the power of the State, as careless students in our day are in danger of concluding that its success was due to the position of Constantine, instead of seeing as they ought that his position was entirely due to its success. He was not the man to espouse a forlorn hope. When the Church had demonstrated her ability to maintain herself, notwithstanding the superstitious hatred of Macrianus, and the deadly persecutions of Valerian, Galerius, and Diocletian, and to survive the loss of such eminent men as the bishops of Nicomedia, Tyre, Sidon, and Emesa, and even to grow stronger and more majestic through tribulation; when, in other words, she had proved conclusively that she was not dependent on an arm of flesh, the emperor stepped forth to embrace her and support her. Doubtless it was very much to her advantage for so notable a personage to become her ally and friend. It meant a decree of toleration and permission to make converts anywhere unhindered; it meant the restoration of her property, confiscated during the persecutions; it meant also restoration to the rights of citizenship, and, by the enactment of a Sunday law, an open door to the masses of the people.

No wonder that some enthusiastic souls imagined that the millennium had dawned, and that soon the kingdoms of this world would become the kingdoms of God and his Christ. In Egypt, aged Alexander and youthful Athanasius, as well as the devoted Arius, must have rejoiced when they heard of the end that had come to ecclesiastical disabilities; likewise the bishops of Syria and of some parts of Asia, Eustathius, Eusebius, and Macarius, and also Leontius of Cæsarea, Maris of Chalcedon, Menophantus of Ephesus, Marcellus of Ancyra, Nicolas of Myra, and other well-known, shining lights in the Church, could hardly fail to believe that the glorious prophecies of Zion’s exaltation and of the world’s subjection to her sway had at last begun. Humbler professors of religion by the thousands congratulated one another, and came forth from obscure hiding places, while here and there some aged Simeon cried: “Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” They felt that the promises made by Christ and his apostles were being fulfilled; and that he might soon be expected to come the second time to reign in glory on the earth. The days of mourning were ended; sorrow had fled with the night, joy had come with the morning. These simple souls probably never stopped to ask how much or how little of this wonderful emancipation was due to Constantine. They saw in him an instrument of providence as Cyrus had been in another age, and as such they honored him, and left future generations to determine whether he became defender of the faith when the faith had triumphed, or had secured its triumph by becoming its defender. We also should be grateful for this sublime victory of the cross, especially as we can see on looking back that it cannot be traced to the interposition of a human scepter; for it teaches us anew that the Gospel is “the power of God unto salvation,” and that,

if faithfully proclaimed, it will overthrow heathenism everywhere and prevail against every form of iniquity.

The edict of Milan, the first tangible fruits of Constantine's successful attack on Maxentius, was published in 313 A. D. This edict may be regarded as the Magna Charta of Christianity. It proclaimed absolute freedom in religion. All persons were to be entirely untrammelled in the profession and exercise of their faith. There thus dawned on the world the glorious principle, which was soon after to be obscured for ages, and which was not to be established as fundamental to society until recent times, that the individual cannot and ought not to abdicate his sovereignty over the domains of thought and conscience. In spiritual things he is responsible to God, and to God only. From the standpoint of civil government the citizen has as much right to be a pagan as a Christian, an infidel as a believer; and had this right been recognized from 313 to 1895 without any reserve, the world would have been spared the terrible spectacles of massacres and unnamable outrages, perpetrated often by monsters of iniquity clothed in sacerdotal robes, for the sake of coercing men and women nobler and purer, and, in the true sense of the term, more sincerely religious than themselves. While Constantine began well, it was soon apparent that his mind was not emancipated from the antique political maxim that, as religion is in some vital manner necessary to the State, the State is bound to watch over it, guard it, and suppress its opponents. Hence, he speedily released the clergy from the duty of serving in municipal affairs, and he donated large sums for their support. The burdens of taxation were diminished, and the Church was permitted to inherit property. Some notable and needful reforms followed. Crucifixion as a punishment was abolished; and criminals were not to be branded any longer on the foreheads. For God had been incarnated, had magnified humanity, and the tabernacle wherein he had dwelt must not be degraded. Capital punishment also, for similar reasons, became less frequent; and merciful treatment of captives was encouraged. Statutes were enacted favorable to greater sanctity in the marriage relation, and advantageous to the protection of children and of slaves. A law was also promulgated setting apart the first day of the week, called Sunday, to rest from toil. The text of this famous document, which was issued 321 A. D., is as follows: "On the venerable day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in the work of cultivation may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often happens that another day is not so suitable for grain-sowing or for vine-planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost. Given the seventh day of March, Crispus and Constantine being Consuls, each of them for the second time."

How far this decree was inspired by a desire to advance Christianity, which had from the beginning observed this very day as "Lord's Day," cannot very well be determined now. One thing, however, is clear: it facilitated the work of the Church by disengaging the attention of the people from the cares of ordinary pursuits, and yet was fair to heathen as to Christian by not imposing any religious observances. Indeed, the attitude of Constantine at this period toward heathenism would not have justified him in any extreme measures of discrimination. He had to move cautiously, and, though evidently disposed to favor the Church, he was not prepared to break finally with the old cult. As M. Beausobre observes: "Constantine advanced but very slowly and amid much circumspection. He allowed the greater part of the pagan temples and other public abodes of idolatry to remain. Divination there was publicly sanctioned. The priests, the Vestals, all the ministers of superstition, were supported at the cost of the public funds, and their privileges, their lands, their funds, and their revenues were carefully maintained. If the private sacrifices were forbidden, public ones were permitted in the great cities, and especially at Rome. The altar of Victory was in honor there to the time of Constantine, who caused it to be removed, soon to be reëstablished by Julian. Pagans were

admitted to places of trust, and composed the Senate. Constantine himself, nine years after his conversion to Christianity, gave permission by law to consult diviners or augurs, and ordered their answer to be reported to him."¹

But these times of ambiguity were destined to pass away. The defeat of Licinius (323 A. D.) on the plains of Hadrianople, and the fall of Byzantium, consolidated the power of Constantine and gave assurance of immunity from pagan plots and aggressions. Paganism had been discredited in battle, as it had previously been outmatched in argument. The discomfiture was complete and irreparable. Now a series of enactments were announced which facilitated the gradual extinction of the old faith. The temples that had fallen into decay were not to be restored. Officials were forbidden to participate in sacrifices to the gods; and lawless plundering of shrines and altars was not restrained as it should have been. Constantine himself entertained court circles with edifying discourses on the truth of Christianity; and, as often the word of royalty has carried more weight with certain polite classes than the profoundest efforts of the logician, it is not to be wondered at that office-bearers and courtiers were speedily converted by an emperor turned preacher. Either in form or in fact the patricians were savingly impressed. Bishops were received in the palaces of the great, and inferior clergy were generally flattered and honored. Church buildings were enlarged, and such edifices multiplied rapidly and were enriched exceedingly. The change was transcendently wonderful. Christianity, from being poor, despised, derided, and persecuted, suddenly became affluent, respected, venerated, and protected. Everywhere the saints were jubilant. Congratulations were common in every meeting of disciples, and songs of thanksgiving and hope were sung throughout the empire.

Alas! this transformation was not without its dark and portentous shadows. The friendship of Constantine was not an unmixed gain. He not only favored the Church, he interfered in her internal affairs. And his connection with her gave rise to notions, theories, customs, and claims that have plagued Christendom ever since his time, and which, in some measure, afflict it still. The Labarum at the head of the legions, while at the first a source of great elation, came in the long run to miseducate the people. What right had any man to use the symbols of Christianity for the purpose of consecrating warfare? There is something akin to profanity in carrying the image of our Lord's cross to wave over the passions of strife, and over the agonies of maimed and disfigured humanity on the battlefield. Let the nations have their tigers, their lions, and their eagles when they must fight, fit emblems these of their savage enmities, but the cross surely has nothing to do with these deadly feuds. Neither ought the sacred monogram ever to have been placed in such dubious fellowship. From the moment that it gleamed above the heads of the armed men, one of the most distinctive ideas of our holy religion, the idea of brotherly love, expressing itself in peace, in generous kindness, in self-sacrifice for others, was obscured and practically discredited. It looked as though Christianity approved the employment of force, and as though she were willing to lend the sanction of her great name to violence and aggression. Better would it have been if her bishops had forbidden the use of any of her emblems by bodies of troops. Their faithful protest would have gone far by this time to render warfare disreputable, as the testimony of saintly souls in the early centuries finally broke up the disgraceful and bloody scenes of the amphitheater and prepared the way for the abrogation of slavery; and doubtless would have saved the Church from the frightful and frequent application of physical coercion on the part of secular government to her own members, who could not, for conscience' sake, comply with its infamous decrees.

Moreover, a serious error was committed in adopting certain pagan rites and ceremonies, and in associating with idolatrous works of art Christian ideas and doctrines. By these concessions not a few prominent people, who were offended by the cross, were soothed and were finally

¹ Preface to "Apocalypse."

persuaded to submit. But the unfortunate compromise entailed on Christendom a number of superstitious observances, which in no small measure perverted its character and hindered its progress. The extent to which this process of adaptation was carried has been set forth by Giovanni Marangoni in a learned volume, and anyone who visits Rome and notes how frequently heathen names are connected with churches, such as St. Maria in Minerva, St. Stefano del Cacco, and observes how, as in the Catacombs of Priscilla, pictures of Orpheus are set forth as pictures of Christ, and how on altars, as in St. Michele in Borgo, there are still bas-reliefs and legends describing the story of Cybele and Atys, may form a judgment of his own on the subject. I confess, as I became personally acquainted with the worship of modern Rome and versed in its lore, I anxiously debated in my own mind whether, after all, Christianity had conquered heathenism, or heathenism had prevailed against Christianity. And as a student of history, were I not satisfied on other grounds as to the presence of a supernatural element in our religion, I should, from a careful induction of facts, be compelled to consider it as evolved from Judaism on the one side, and from paganism on the other. I am not, therefore, surprised that multitudes of thoughtful people in all ages have hesitated to subscribe to its claims, and have failed to see under the gorgeous robes of glittering mythologies, the beauty and simplicity of that gracious Gospel, which charmed and comforted when proclaimed by its divine Author in the cities and villages of Palestine.

In almost every respect the official alliance of the kingdoms of this world with the kingdom of Christ has turned out to be a grievous misfortune. It has tended to secularize and degrade religion, and has given rise to the suspicion that Christianity would never have succeeded had it not been for the patronage and support of kings. Still is it a stock argument in the mouth of those ecclesiastics who delight in being recognized at court, that worship cannot be adequately maintained on the voluntary principle. The advocates of this union fail apparently to realize that in accepting favors from the State the law of reciprocity comes in, and that the Church must repay, and in such a way as to satisfy her benefactor. Hence the temptation to subordinate religion to government, and to make the former as much a mere matter of policy as the latter. Professionalism on the part of the clergy, formalism on the part of the laity, and latitudinarianism on the part of the nation, both in belief and in morals, are some of the evils inseparable from this fellowship. Where it has prevailed the State has not improved, has not been conducted with more enlightenment and with less corruptibility than elsewhere, and the Church has always lost in purity, spirituality, and independence. The ill effects of the system are felt even after the system itself has been repudiated. To-day, in countries where it is maintained no longer, it is seen that multitudes of Christians seek the smiles and patronage of the world, study its moods, adopt its methods, and judge their successes and failures by its standards. They seek exemption of Church property from taxation, they plead for rigorous sabbath laws to be enforced by the secular arm, and at times ask for appropriations in lands or moneys from the commonwealth in the interests of their benevolent institutions and schools of learning. In some nations the alliance between Church and State has simply given way to a fresh adultery—the alliance of the Church with the world. The queen may not be acknowledged as “Defender of the Faith,” but fashion has been enthroned in many congregations; ecclesiastics may no longer sit in legislative halls, but some among them do not hesitate to employ the vulgar political machine; preachers may decline to be bound by ancient decrees and old theologies, but they often exhibit the most remarkable alacrity in squaring their teachings to the wildest speculations of a fluctuating and uncertain science; and committees, deacons, elders, may now piously rejoice that they are absolved from obedience to the temporal power in holy things, but at the same time manifest a most unseemly obsequiousness to the views of gilded society in directing the affairs of the Redeemer’s empire. Will it please? will it pay? will it be popular? are inquiries more frequently indulged in when discussing pastorates, special services,

and new departures, than the higher questions, Will it help, bless, and save? To such wretched depths has the kingdom of Christ been driven by the fatal friendship of Constantine, and the deplorable consequence of the time-serving spirit, the littleness, cowardice, and sordidness that have debased the Church, that the world has but meager respect for her authority, and in sacrificing her own dignity to gain its support she has lost its homage.

But in addition to these unhappy effects of what at the time was considered a great boon, the so-called conversion of the emperor gave rise to a certain fiction, which has been employed with remarkable success in bolstering the assumptions of the papacy. This fable is known to ecclesiastical students as the "Donation of Constantine." It asserts that in the seventh year of his reign he was afflicted with leprosy, and that after trying the skill of magicians, and after being advised to apply the blood of infants, he was healed by the Roman bishop. The story declares that Constantine was baptized in the Lateran palace by Sylvester, on whom he bestowed, not only the palace, but Rome itself and Italy as well. That this tradition obtained wide and general credence is witnessed by Dante's familiar lines :

" Ah ! Constantine ; to how much ill gave birth,
Not thy conversion, but those rich domains
That the first wealthy pope received of thee ! "

And yet this alleged transaction is not sanctioned by a particle of trustworthy evidence. Historical students attach no importance to it in our day ; and it is only circulated in subdued tones among ignorant devotees by ecclesiastics, who know no better or who fail to see the moral enormity involved in an agreement whereby a prominent pastor is willing to grant absolution for the murder of a wife, a son, and a nephew, in return for a temporal principality. We think too highly of Sylvester to imagine him capable of so monstrous a crime. It is probable that the story originated in connection with the transfer of the Lateran palace to the Church by the Empress Fausta, to whom it belonged ; and that in course of time the legend was evolved and elaborated to suit the pressing needs of a hierarchy that claimed authority over all the kings of the earth. In confirmation of this view it should be remembered that Sylvester did not preside at the Council of Nice, the first General Council held after the allegiance of Constantine had been pledged to the cross ; neither was that council called in his name, nor was he termed Pope, that ominous title being given early in the fourth century only to Alexander, the aged bishop of Alexandria, in Egypt, and that, too, merely as a matter of affection and courtesy. But who is there that cannot see in the stupendous and overshadowing structure that has risen on so slim a foundation the evidence that from apparently trifling mistakes gravest sequences, out of all proportion in magnitude to their causes, may proceed, and that the introduction of an element foreign to the genius of Christianity has largely determined and, may it not be said, perverted its historic development ? The influence of Constantine went far toward turning the religion of our Lord from the lofty ideals by which it was governed in its primitive stage, and facilitated its despicable subordination to the kings of the earth.

This momentous era has long since closed, and yet we suffer, many of us, perhaps unconsciously, from its mischievous movements. Its alliances and councils have confused our moral judgments and have enslaved us to ideas and methods that are vicious and delusive. Dead hands pull the wires that are composed of centuries of religious fatuity and falseness, and the poor puppets of this generation go mechanically through their pious platitudinizing and attitudinizing. No organization has as yet been able to break entirely the spell of that long past. It reigns supreme. If deliverance is to be attained, it can only come through a resolute determination to return to the Christianity of the New Testament. But so great a change, so remarkable a reaction, would be a marvel almost as stupendous as that which ushered in the establishment of the primitive Church. No passage of resolutions, no elaborate annual sermons before conventions, immensely applauded and immediately forgotten, and no fresh contrivances in the

way of sensational armies or boys' brigades will succeed in restoring to God's people their real liberty and power. If this history from the first book to the last teaches anything distinctly, it is that man's religious life can only be maintained by direct communion with the Almighty, that its fires can only be kindled and perpetuated by the live burning coals taken directly from the invisible altar, and that its expansion, enlargement, and completion can only be effected by the immediate presence and direct action of the Infinite Spirit. When this truth has not been realized, the Bible has shown us only idolatries, formalities, hypocrisies, growing into violence and corruption; but when it has been felt, that book has disclosed the loftiest characters and the noblest achievements. We need again to learn that the source of everything holy, profound, and inspiring in society is the spiritual, and that the Church is designed to be the organ of the spiritual, and that, consequently, only as she is spiritual is she capable of fulfilling her exalted vocation. Here, then, is the sufficient answer to the lamentations of those who bewail the condition of Zion. Her help to-day is where it was in the times of Isaiah and Paul, when her children were cast into the fire at Babylon, or to the lions at Rome. If Christians would only believe this and call on God to save them, he who remembered his people in the past would restore their real glory in the present. This is the burden of Bible history; and this from the beginning has been accompanied by the thought that whatever is wrought is achieved through the grace and power of the Christ. And this, too, our century needs to learn.

I have said that the conformity of the Church to the New Testament ideal would be a miracle. But it is a possible miracle; for it is a work which must be done by Christ if done at all. The prominence given to him in the Bible reminds us that he must be equally magnified in the Church now, if we would see the grandest results. He must be made in the Church what he is in the Old and New Testaments, if the Church is to regain her primitive standing. And to this end the labors of all our preachers, teachers, critics, philosophers, and philanthropists should be directed. A learned writer once ventured the statement that, however excellent the translation of Homer, no one had ever been able to convey a just idea of the true character and air of the original; and that even Pope had only clothed the naked majesty of Homer with the graces and elegancies of modern fashion, and had degraded the poet by such a dress. Yet, notwithstanding such blemishes, the Greek bard, the more he is studied the more completely does he master thought and cultivate taste. And this is far truer of Jesus than of Homer. We may have failed in our translation of his preëminent greatness, and may never be able to reproduce that indescribably divine something about him that has charmed the ages. It is probable, also, that we, too, may have belittled him by some of our descriptions, and perhaps by our attempts to define him and explain him in the terminology of our meager theologies. Nevertheless, all that we are for good is due to our thought of him; and if we would escape from the worldliness that came into the Church with Constantine, and if we would realize in Christ's kingdom a "kingdom not of this world," then let us meditate upon him supremely "to whom gave all the prophets witness," and trust him who imparts unity and splendor to all the ages embraced in Bible history, and before whom, in the fullness of time, "every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and . . . every tongue confess" that he is "Lord, only to the glory of God the Father."

Above the gateway of the Signoria Palace or Municipal Hall in Florence may still be seen carved in stone the monogram of Christ. On the same tablet there had once been inscribed the words: "Jesus Christ, elected by decree of the Senate King of the Florentine people." Three centuries before, also, the mayor of the city, Niccolo Caprivi, and the Council and the people generally had acknowledged him to be their chosen ruler, and solemnly engaged to be loyal to him, and to him only. A record is still preserved of this covenant. It may be read on the battlements of the old palace. And likewise the hope, the confidence and dependence of the citizens have been expressed in these felicitous Latin sentences:

"JESUS

Christus Rex Gloriæ venit in pace;
 Christus vincit, Christus regnat,
 Christus imperat,
 Christus ab omni malo nos defendat !"

"Jesus Christ, the King of Glory, comes in peace; Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ rules; may Christ protect us from all evil !"

As we have examined in this history the sacred Scriptures, from the beginning to the end we have caught glimpses of his name. Even over the gateway of Genesis we have discerned his monogram, though the full text of his coming to bruise the serpent's head is not as legible to some of our interpreters as it was to the Fathers. But as we have examined the towers and battlements of divine truth we have had yet clearer evidence that they are written over with promises and predictions of his advent and mission. And as we have inspected the New Testament we have seen him the center of loving groups, pledging him their loyalty, and vowing themselves his forever. The example of the Florentines, which but faintly illustrates the recognition of our Lord's supremacy in the Bible, should appeal to us on the close of this nineteenth century. We, too, should elect him to be our King. When he is related to modern society as he is to every section of Revelation, to the Law, to the Psalms, to the Prophets, and to the Gospels and Epistles; that is, when his righteous will becomes the rule of our statutes, his spiritual beauty the ideal of our art, his sacrificial love the soul of our music and poetry, his personal sympathy the model of our philanthropy, and when his character becomes the inspiration and pattern of our manhood; then will the injustice and inequality, which distress and lead to despair, disappear like night before the ascending day.

The writers of this volume have tried to show how Christ is the central figure of Holy Writ, giving to the inspired Word its unity, its spirituality, and splendor, that the people who read may be constrained to make him central to the coming age, that in its turn the age may be, like the Bible, coherent, progressive, and morally sublime. In the treatment of so large a theme by various pens some repetitions, and even some differences of interpretation, could hardly be avoided. But, though the point of view may not always have been the same, and one author may, therefore, not have agreed with the others in matters of detail, all the eminent men who have contributed to this history have laid the tribute of their genius at the feet of Christ. They have with one accord exalted him, as he ought to be exalted by humanity everywhere; and, closing these pages, he will have read but poorly who does not realize, as never in the past, the truth of what has been sung in many a modest church and stately old cathedral, and which should be to him the expression of his own creed and purpose :

"The glorious company of the Apostles praise thee.
 The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise thee.
 The noble army of Martyrs praise thee.
 The holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee.

THOU ART THE KING OF GLORY, O CHRIST.
 THOU ART THE EVERLASTING SON OF THE FATHER."

Geo. C. Loomer

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